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KESHUB'S RELIGION OF INSPIRATION

by

Upadhyaya Gour Govind Roy

Translated by

JAMINI KANTA KOAR

Graduate, Meadville Theological School, Pa, U. S. A.

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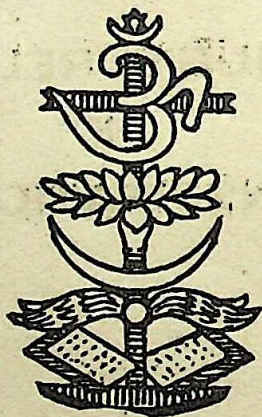
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**PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF
SIND NAVAVIDHAN MISSION TRUST
Kamla High School, Khar, BOMBAY - 62.**

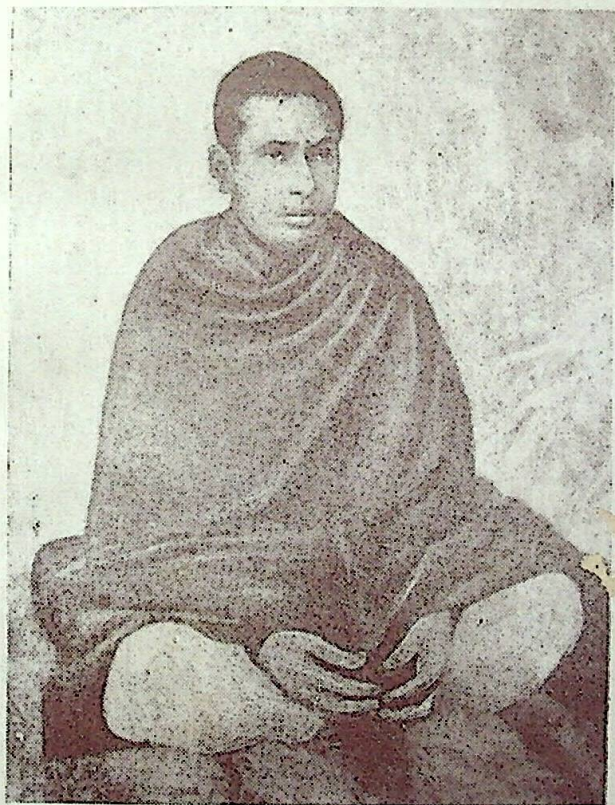
HARMONY OF RELIGIONS



SYMBOLS OF THE SPIRIT

OM	: Hinduism
CROSS	: Christianity
LOTUS	: Buddhism
CRESCENT	: Islam
WINGS	: Zoroastrianism
TABLETS	: Judaism

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Rev. Gour Govind Roy

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DEDICATION

To Upadhyaya Gour Govind
Roy *Who was Commissioned by Keshub
to go "Where is to be found reconcil-
iation of the opposites, where the four
Vedas (Yoga, Bhakti, Karma, Gyan)
are held in in-dissoluble union"*.

FOREWORD

“Thy way of life means Dispensation. Dispensation means word; word means all Thy sons, saints and devotees. Thy word assuming the shape of humans came forth into the world. Thy solemn word coming out of the awe-inspiring heavens spreads itself over the whole Universe; but coming to the earth means being made flesh in the form of man, of the Dispensation, of the laws of life. I believe that the word has come into the world, has set up a stupendous commotion, and has entered as a creative personality in the heart of a group. Deplorable is their spiritual state who would not listen to this word, this way of life.”—Prayer—Keshub

THE SPIRIT IN HISTORY.

Higher humanity, in latest or earliest time is practically the spirit of God. The Infinite as an objective is a matter of glimmering consciousness,—half revealed, if not hidden—the constrainer of our wondering faith, a reverence trembling at its own ignorance and littleness. God in the finite—in nature, in life, and most of all in man and man's achievements—rules the world's faith and spiritual life. You ask whether any particular form of religion will last? The answer is, Has that religion a divine man-centre, a commissioned prophet, an inspired apostolate? If it has, it will surely last; if it has not, even Omnipotence cannot save it. Forms of thought, rules of conduct, decisions of majorities, fiat of councils bide their day, long or short; but spiritual religion, union with God, means union with the divine concrete.—

—Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE-INTRODUCTION

Keshub's Religion of Inspiration.

Discovered during my intensive search for some light on the New Child symbolism; these articles in the old files of the *Dharmatatwa* reaffirmed my faith in Keshub's selection of the Upadhyaya as the fittest expositor of the science of synthesis (*Samanaya*.)

Written during the very end of his apostolic career, they should be regarded as a summing up, unparalleled and unique. The orientation, the arrangement, the headings and sequences of the chapters form a pattern after which Keshub's life may be studied anew with profit. *The whole is constellated round the short and pithy daily prayers of Keshub in Bengali.* The Upadhyaya says:—

“Keshub came to hold forth an ideal before the world; this ideal is to be found incorporated in his daily prayers”.

The Upadhyaya among all the interpreters of Keshub had alone done this,

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using as many as forty five prayers to support his thesis. I have attempted to translate this volume in the hope that it will tempt a larger public to the study of Keshub's prayers in Bengali,—the crowning glory of our vernacular literature. Their total number as recorded in the four volumes published comes to about 1300.

The prayers of Keshub, though expressed in *human* terms, contain pearls of divine inspiration. The Upadhyaya rightly makes inspiration (1) the ruling principle of Keshub's life, and the New Faith, revealed during Community-worship, is rightly named "The Dispensation of the Holy Spirit". In these inspirational upliftments, Keshub realised the corporate character, the community-dimension of the individual soul, and proclaimed in 1881, his epoch-making formulation of "I and my brother are one". It meant for him the building up of One Family, One Community, One Kingdom of Heaven on earth,

(1) Compare Zen Buddhism's disciplines for inspiration.

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—a transformed world home, and these make up the opening chapters of the Upadhyaya's book.

Keshub speaks of two chords of the spiritual life, the upper half consisting of Union with God, and the lower half of Union with humanity. Christ's words: "I and my father are one" represented the 'upper half' while Keshub's "I and my Brother are one," represent the 'lower half' as the core of *the new emphasis* of The New Dispensation

Keshub, however, did not stop with formulating his new vision, he taught his associates to realise it in their life and environment. How? By giving them the formulary (*Mantra*) for Spiritual exercise —

"I in you, you in me" (*tumi amate ami tomate*); a coinage as original and unique as "I and my brother are one"

"I in you, you in me"

"I in you, you in me"

"I in you, you in me."

So runs the refrain as an under-current in the believer of "The New Dispensation"

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and the result is the formation of groups in the family, Community, humanity. This the Upadhyaya brings up in the next four chapters of Section II—The New World Home, Husband and Wife, Brother and Sister, Servant and Disciple.

The last section begins with Humility as the hidden substratum of the Spiritual life,—the seed-plot of Bhakti where meets the Upper and the lower half;—the love of God and the service of man. The chapter on Community—centred conscience (*dalagata Vivek*) which may be said to be the most remarkable pronouncement of the author as showing at once the glory and the shame of our group-life. The last two chapters, the climax of the whole series, deal with the consolidation of the Apostolic Assembly—*The Sri Durbar* for which Keshub spent his life—blood drop by drop, and which formed the touchstone by which he tested all group-life.

He used to say,—year in, year out
 “There is one book which I study, and that
 is the vast volume of human nature” For him

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this volume was epitomized in the *Darbar* group, an assembly of a dozen dedicated spirits recruited from Young Bengal. It was his laboratory where he tested the truths revealed by God and taught by history and humanity. The prophet's vision, the poet's passion and the priest's zeal all find expression in his masterly characterization of the apostolic body, published on July 23, 1882 [New Dispensation, Vol. II, P. 70.)

“Those who live in ideas find ideas living for them. Each man whom God has chosen for his work is a Living Idea. He is a stone out of which the Kingdom of heaven is to be built and the Kingdom of Heaven is an ideal Kingdom. St. Paul indicated the functions of the body spiritual. Each one has an allotted sphere within which he is essential. One is a born minister, who represents within him **the deep and real wants of many and labours to remove them.** Another is a father and guardian who feeds and protects the faithful. Another is a model of self-abnegation, trustfulness and surrender to principle. Another represents asceticism and

moral strictness in his person. Another leads the people by the devotions and poetry of his music. One is born to nurse men in sick bed, and study the character and qualities of the saints. Another feels called upon by the benevolence of his nature to serve as a servant in the houses of the faithful. Another is impelled to labour to gather men, and cement them together by the power of his energetic missionary spirit. Another is exemplary by his quiet prayerful tendencies and obedient serviceableness to the community. Another is distinguished by his meekness of disposition, and devoted application to work. Another may have the gift of taking charge to a distant fold and act the part of a shepherd to the sheep. While yet another may consider it his mission to supply the vineyard of the Lord with streams of gold which suffice for the most necessary undertakings. One man may be devotional, another man may be intellectual. One may speak, another may write. One may teach women, another may take charge of children. One may labour in the field of charity, another in the field of propagation. But each is not only important but

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essential to the formation of the household of God. Each represents an idea in his life, he is a principle incarnate."

What disparities, what diverse traits and temperaments in this portrayal, and it was Keshub who alone discovered the divine secret which kept them together for more than twenty-five years. Where others found conflicts and contradictions, repelling and derisive, Keshub found that it is in the disparities that they complemented one another. On this complementary character was reared the fabric of his synthesis, harmony, integration, and spiritual atonement.

Here comes the contribution of the author of this book. The marshalling of select prayers round this theme reveals genius at once versatile and penetrating. Knowing full well that uptill now we have not been able to live up to this ideal, he has prepared for our guide a list of about forty prayers of Keshub on group-life. The doctrine of direct inspiration, of group-will, unanimity in joint deliberations, and concerted efforts,

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and most of all in corporate communion which meant the holding up of synthesis and spiritual atonement.

INTERDEPENDENCE.

As the maturer state of independence became at once a crown and a cross for the group. Inspiration and Interdependence may be said to be the two poles of the group-life. Inspiration with its gift of individual independence came easy but not so interdependence which meant the discipline of a bhakti of a very high order,—a bhakti which sees in differences, diversities, God-given variations which the alchemy of understanding love has to fuse together to form a family, a community.

But this understanding love is a gift of the Time-Spirit,—The *Yuga-dharma*, the God of special providence in whom the scriptures, prophets, and races become one. So sang the singing apostle:—

“Behold, all merge in the blazing glory of the god head which fusing all hearts as in a furnace, makes all men and women

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embers of one mystical body." [Sankirtan, 1893]

That this group inspite of its many achievements failed to meet the demands of the Time – spirit is brought home to us by Keshub who, as minister of the group while taking the responsibility of the failure on himself, scribbled the following message for its guidance. Written during his last illness it may well be called —

Keshub's Last Will and Testament.

"Asceticism has not taken root.

"Decline of Inspiration and apostolic spirit among missionaries.

"Decay of true brotherhood and forgiveness

"Growth of proud and selfish individuality.

"Neglect of yoga.

"Want of harmony among characters"

The devout lover, the bhakta yogi sees the hand of "God the Supreme Artist", in the last chapter, shaping human destiny

and commits himself and the group into God's hands. This operation involving the transposition of persons and personalities, the inter-linking of the destinies of the dedicated is an arduous affair. To stabilize it in day to day living we have to keep on releasing the nuclear powers of our being,— mutual trust, love and forgiveness — which like radio — active emanations must flow in one continuous stream of communion. Such is the theme of Keshub's Religion of Inspiration.

PART I

Inspiration : Union of opposites

The New Dispensation — its other name is the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? He at whose touch trees and stones break into speech and all objects and persons bring the tidings of heaven. In what form does He come? In the form of Divine Inspiration, of an access of energy, of superhuman powers. Why is there this paramountcy of the Holy Spirit in the New Dispensation? Because in this dispensation not only the Vedas, Vedantas, Puranas, the Bible, the Lalita Vistara and various other scriptures, but also all the Rishis and Maharshis of our motherland and other lands, have become one. Whose is the power which effects this union? The Holy Spirit's! He who wants to become one with all what other course left for him but the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?

The term Holy Spirit is taken from the Christian Scriptures. Has not Keshub by

using this expression declared himself an avowed disciple of Christ? If so, it is a mistake to say that in him all the scriptures and prophets of the world have been united. Keshub's life did begin with Christ, and that is why from the very first *prayer* is his mainstay. He whose mainstay is prayer how can he be affiliated to anyone else but Christ? You say that in the Rig Veda there is preponderance of prayer. Yes, but that prayer is not of the kind which Keshub used to offer. In short whatever argument you bring forward, you have to acknowledge that Keshub's life began with Christ.

On the eve of his death Christ said to his disciples that he will send the Holy Spirit who will lead them unto all truth, and that they will do what he could not do in his life time. This is certainly not a false promise, and if Keshub demonstrated in his own life that what Christ promised was true, then why should it be considered an impossible thing that what was not explicitly brought to light in Christ would be seen in Keshub's life? This is verily, the purpose of



Jesus Christ



dispensations! Even admitting that such is the purpose of Providence, the dispenser of dispensations, the national or the patriotic instinct makes one ask,—Why is Christ who is a foreigner, a heretic and a Jew, made the prime preceptor of the New Dispensation? If you look upon the ancient Indian rishis and maharshis as too far removed in point of time, why was not Sree Chaitanya so very near in point of time, accepted as a preceptor? If you say the blame of idolatry attaches to Sree Chaitanya, and therefore he should be kept at a distance,—such a charge falls to the ground when you find Keshub addressing God in these words, “Beloved Lord, Cowherd (Gopal) you play on the flute and let all dance(1) merrily in accompaniment with the tune.” He who has said this, he has indeed bound Christ and Chaitanya together as with one cord. Bound them together with what bond of union? The bond of Divine inspiration, the power of the Holy Spirit! To

(1) “The Family of undivided heart,
—“*Abhinyahridaya Parivara*” Oct. 27, 1882,
Bengali prayers.

Keshub there is no country, native or foreign, Aryan or non-Aryan, all are one in the Eternal and Infinite Reality. What wonderful spiritual union is portrayed in the words of (1) our hymn,—“On the right hand of Keshub, the Holy Jesus; on the left shines the beautiful moon, Gour Chandra (Chaitanya)”. That union which a thousand years could not bring about has come to pass in Keshub. What more can we ask ?

In Keshub's life there is present both intuitive perception (*Samyoga*) and reflective discrimination (*Viyoga*). Reflection at the beginning of his life, intuitive perception a little later. As he grew in years intuitive perception grew from more to more, and reflection suffered an eclipse, so much so that it covered the whole gamut of inspirational experience, from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the inspiration from the flute of the Divine Lover ! What do we see in this amazing development ? Union of opposites. The union of opposites, then, is Keshub's life gospel ! To bring about the unification of opposites, it

(1) Bengali hymn—“*Kirupa dekhali Janani*”.

cannot be done by the effort of man, it is never effected without the operation of the Holy Spirit. Up to his time the union of opposites had not been effected. It is the advent of the Holy Spirit which brought it about. On one extreme is Christ, on the other Sree Chaitanya,—in between these two all scriptures and prophets are gathered together. Let us see how it is done.

Early in youth Keshub joined the Brahmo Samaj. From that time on he had never shown any disregard for the Brahmo Samaj. But in a sermon in Bengali on "God's Enemies", delivered Feb. 15, 1880, it seems as if he had done so. Those who rejecting all prejudicial notions will read it from beginning to end will be convinced that though he has scathing condemnation for those who disbelieve in the direct action of Providence, he has never expressed any feeling of disparagement towards the real believers in the Brahmo Samaj faith. Lest people who have any mistaken notion on this point that he has made a distinction between true believers and unbelievers, the former designated as belong-

ing to the reformed Brahmo Samaj and the latter simply to the Brahmo Samaj membership. When all his life long Keshub was a worshipper of One God, why should it be deemed impossible that he would accord a fitting place to the rishis of the Vedanta? When the spiritual grandfather (Raja Ram-mohan) and the spiritual father (Maharshi Devendra Nath) of the Brahmo Samaj have both shown such high regard for the Aryan rishis of ancient India, it must be readily admitted that his veneration of the rishis has been caught from them. After Rammohun came Devendra Nath from whom personally Keshub received his initiation into Brahmoism. But here we are confronted with the question,—how did the Aryan rishis and Christ both together found a place in the heart of Keshub, when Devendra Nath, unable to forgive Christ his alien non-Aryan ancestry, not only cast him aside, but became alienated from Keshub, his spiritual godson, because of his devotion to Christ? Keshub had himself spoken of how they both found a place in him. “I and my Father are one”—in this one saying Keshub, found the

authority to seat both the Aryan and the Semitic rishi—Christ in the same seat of honour, and he felt that by this action of his loyalty to his motherland was in no sense belittled but rather enhanced. From big learned scholars to the most illiterate person in India,—all are in favour of the doctrine or religion of oneness. From this Keshub took it for granted that Christ found a place in the heart of India, and he would not be unseated therefrom.

When Keshub's unflinching loyalty to Christ went hand in hand with his devotion to the rishis, there remained no obstacle for welcoming the Buddha! Christ was a believer of God, so were the Aryan rishis, but Buddha did not believe in God. Why then did Keshub welcome Buddha with reverence? No reason can be found for this in anything external, but by entering into the depths of the spirit one can understand it. From his loving reverence for Christ has sprung up his reverence for Buddha. By denying the existence of the "soul" Buddha caused it to be spirited away; to him the ego or individ-

uality became wholly unreal. Is not this spirit 'to deny oneself' also predominant in Christ? Where there is agreement, unity in spirit and in truth, how can Christ be alien to Buddha or Buddha alien to Christ? Well, but what becomes of Christ's Holy Spirit? Does it not bring before us Buddha's words,—“Take refuge in the Self, Take refuge in the Eternal Law?” In Christ's saying,—“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness”, do you not see the underlying unity between Buddha's and Christ's spirit? Whatever we may think or say, that of the two, reflective abstraction and intuitive perception, the former should, early in his career, give place to intuitive perception as the ruling principle of his life, would only be in the natural course of things. That these have been brought about through the principle of intuitive perception is understandable, but why this unification of opposites? What do you call the opposites? If for example, you take the case of man and woman, are you thinking of this kind of opposites? To bring the pair of opposites into the common ground of union is the work of the Holy Spirit; and

since the New Dispensation has come to bring about this very thing, how can it help not ushering in Christ into the field of action from the very first?

(i) Says Keshub,—“When the yogi goes to Nature, Nature says,—O yogi, first attune yourself to the rythm in me, otherwise you will not attain to the Godhead. Here I am with the sun and the moon, the winds, the roar of thunder, the lightning, the oceans, gardens, beasts and birds all making up a harmonious tune; come unto me, catch the spirit of this harmony from me, become one with it, only then will you have the vision of the Godhead. You cannot pass over this intermediary Nature and go to God”.

(ii) Nature goes futher and says, in the words of Keshub; “Love alone or knowledge alone will not do ! Man looking after man alone, woman looking after woman alone, will not do ? My Lord, the

(i) Prayer, May 31, 1880—“*Tin Khani*” soor

(ii) Prayer, June 4, 1880, *Prakritir nam samanjasya*

Sovereign of the universe, the King of kings what does He do ? In His kingdom are to be found all things. Observe the tiger and lamb drinking at the same watering place; His Kingdom is the kingdom of unity. One can see the religion of the Hindu, Moslem, Vaishnava, Buddhist and Christian—the spirit of man, woman and child all moving towards the same ideal. O Divine Mother, what is it I am praying for ? I want nature in its purity, not *denatured* perversion. I want peace and unity. I want that the few who have found shelter in the New Dispensation, would become yogi, lover, man, woman and child at one and the same time. The sun, moon, the winged creatures, the fishes in the water, the peal of thunder, the sweet song of birds, the roar of the tempest, the soft murmur of tiny leaves' — we should not be out of tune with any of these". Here the old and venerable yogi, there another busy working for his family amidst the bustle and tumult of the world, there should be friendship between the two. One poring over thousands of books and by study acquiring knowledge, and the other giving up books, takes himself to medi-

tation and is absorbed in it one must cultivate fellowship with both. Knowing all these to be part of nature there should be no conflict with anyone".

Who is it that cannot harbour any feeling of antipathy towards any one? He who has been gripped by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwelling each and every one says, - "I am bringing about all this". The devout believer bearing these words is calmed and becomes absorbed in meditation. It was this spirit which was predominant in Christ. He said, - "I do what the Father doeth, I say what the Father speaketh". In the New Dispensation these words of Christ are being reechoed. Christ life dominated by the passion of listening to the voice of God, the Aryan rishi-life dominated by the passion of God vision, these two have, in the New Dispensation, thus become united in Keshub.* Therefore he could declare, "Those who extol me as preeminent because of the gift of seeing and hearing God, they are also liars. God-vision

*"Misreading My Life" "Jeevan Veda" by Keshub.

is not a mark of extraordinary greatness neither is hearing God an extraordinary gift. As you see the material objects in the external world, so is seeing God. As He makes me think, so I think, As He makes me speak so I speak. As He inspires me to preach so I preach. My union with Him is an extremely simple and normal experience."

That seeing and hearing were one and indivisible in Keshub is beautifully expressed in the following words :- "If there is any other power occult or esoteric; I have not been given it"

What a wonderful union of the Aryan and Semitic rishis in Keshub ! Who can deny that in this union of the two the New Dispensation and the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit are one and the same.



ONE FAMILY

The second characteristic mark of Keshub's Life is his endeavour to bind heaven and earth together into a united family. We can never forget that his life came to an untimely end while engaged in this work. The work for which one sacrifices his life is, certainly, not a trifling affair. The draining away of his life-blood for the work shows that he had been chosen and called by Providence for its accomplishment. To ordinary people the fact of being beset by manifold trials and obstacles in the doing of one's life work, and eventually dying with aspirations unfulfilled militates against the purposes of Providence. But the incredible thing is that though beset by unfavourable circumstances, these persons continually enjoy such gifts of Divine grace that, whether understood by others or not, they themselves know too well that though heaven and earth pass away what they are doing will never at any time suffer destruction. The lives of ordinary men

are unstable and fleeting, and so are their works. They themselves know that just as a line drawn on water leaves no trace behind, so their life and labours will leave no trace after them, that everything will be wiped away. It may be that through the work of some of them many are benefitted, and gain an increase of knowledge, and there is also a great increase of happiness and well-being in the world. During their life time the world resounds with the song of their praise; but the passage of time proves that like the rest of the fleeting world they pass away. The palatial mansions that they built crumble into dust leaving no trace of their achievements. Referring to this Christ said, "These have received their merited reward," that is, with this short-lived praise everything comes to an end. But those who for the sake of truth and God suffer much persecution in the present they do not indeed receive the fruits of their labours waiting ready for them; but the remote future waits, a silent witness to their labours, and the Heavenly reward which, while it has a beginning in time but which time cannot destroy, waits for them.

To establish a happy family free from all contention,—it is for this that Keshub's life-blood was spilled, and he had to depart from this world broken-hearted. Even now look at people of all kinds pointing the finger at him saying, "Is he not the same person who spoke so eloquently of establishing God's family on earth, and held forth the hope of his family and community as providing a model for the same,—see his words have proved false?" Who will say whether this defeat is not victory? If it is a fact that Keshub has given his blood drop by drop for the establishment of the family, and if there is not the least doubt about it in our mind, we find no hesitation in saying that the visible, apparent defeat is indeed a victory!

Even seeing that his words were day by day, becoming fruitless in the lives of his friends and relations why did he still keep up his hope and enthusiasm? What did he see in direct vision which made his hope wax stronger instead of waning? The message of hope which he preached to the

world has it been fulfilled anywhere any-time? India has long been hearing the words—"The Kingdom of Heaven" from the mouths of foreigners—a Christian saying which has not yet been realized even among their own people. Why does Keshub show such zeal in taking up that unfulfilled promise and making it current in India only to meet with ignominy (i) and frustrated efforts? Has he not said,—“O God, remove the false belief of mankind that he (referring to himself) who has been, in co-partnership with mankind, and is indivisibly one with it from eternity in heaven, can be cut off from it? So much so that the tambourine on which Jesus plays, its music reaches our ears, even as we hear the music of Gouranga's (Sree Chaitanya's) brass gong.” This is the proof of our unity.

Buddhist, Christian and Moslem, they are mutually at variance with one another; where one is the other would not go. Yet he to whom their oneness has been

(i) Prayers, Nov. 19, 1882, "*Angaprtatyanger Milanerjany*"

revealed, all quarrels have ended for him and all together have formed a family undivided within him. What he saw realized in himself, he beheld the same as a heavenly reality and seeing, declared,—that which had not been realised so long has now come to be, therefore there is no cause for despair. There is one undivided family in heaven and on earth, it is an eternal reality realised. How can there be any doubt that it is bound to be established on earth? Why will Keshub feel any apprehension in presenting to the world this experienced reality the vision of which made him as one possessed?

We all know that this thing was not realised by Keshub in a day; it came about by degrees. Speaking of himself he said :—“Whose life can show such conflict with the ideals of the New Dispensation as mine own” He who could say this unhesitatingly of himself, how could he in the same breath say;—“O Lord, in Thy Heavenly mansion, Thou didst bring into being a person after Thine own heart, I am that man wrought by Thy hand. When I was fully formed, my

hands, feet, nose, ears also took form within me. When Thou didst bring me into the world, I came embodied as a collective entity, an indivisible whole."

When did he say this? When he beheld the purpose of Providence revealed in his life. Did he see it only in himself? No, when he had foreglimpse of its manifestation in science, philosophy and in human life; he also beheld with divine insight that the necessary qualifications for presenting it to the world were in him. When he became convinced that his character, disposition, taste and faith all lay in that direction there was no reason for hesitating to make such a declaration in public. When he discovered that all the sages, seers, saints and great men had gathered together in his heart, that all the various races of man, inspite of their manifold differences, have become one with him, in an indivisible union, that what science has so long been declaring as truth has become an experienced reality in his life, then he boldly declared, — "All mankind is one. The new child of the New Divine Mother (goddess

Durga) is a new creation, a new being having hundreds of hands, ears, noses and eyes. This man of new features and form, this protean person is me".

Whence this presumption? Is this self-glorification or the operation of God Himself in this age? The whole world of science cries aloud,— it is God's doing! The days of reflective abstraction and differentiation are over, the day of intuitive perception and integration has come. That which was mere speculation in philosophy manifested itself in Keshub's life and in the life of humanity; in fact the whole world, more or less, bears witness to the power of this truth. Dire calamity will befall him who inspite of the signs of the times will not wake up from his slumber.

This realised experience is certainly not meant for a solitary individual but for one and all? Keshub shows the way when he says,— "O Darling Cowherd (Gopala) you play on the flute and let all dance merrily in tune with its music". What comes of it?

The union of diverse tastes and wills becomes a possibility. Where this happens there hundred individuals become as one. But this union of wills does it bring death or life? Apart from God no union of tastes and wills can come into being; conflict of self-wills is inevitable and is sure to produce conflagration. How can they save themselves from this fiery ordeal whose hearts have not been entranced by the music of the Charmer's flute? But this counsel of perfection is an impossible thing for men of the past as well as for those of the present. A special dispensation of God invariably comes when a radical change takes place in connection with certain aspects of a people's life. Has it happened again this time? If it has not, then our oft-repeated cry of a (new) dispensation is of no avail. What does it avail to say that it has been realised in Keshub's life, if its characteristic features are not found in the whole of humanity? That these signs are in evidence the following prayer of Keshub shows:-

(i) "O Friend of the lowly, helper of the helpless, only those seeds that were sown they are bearing fruit. O God, independence and love these were the two seeds sown. These two seeds have sprouted and are bearing fruit among us. If the two had sprouted together it would have been productive of good all round. But Thy practicans in the course of their religious pursuit have eventually come to the conclusion that unless one works by himself, in isolation, the work does not turn out to be satisfactory. No one else should pass any judgment on the work that I do, others should not interfere with it; I will do as I think best, this belief is to be found, more or less in every one of us. The practican (Reverend Bhai Peary Mohun Chowdhury) — is carrying this belief with him to that part of the world (England) to which he is going. He is being led by this belief. Who can say that all the others too may not, in the same manner, go away one by one. He whom everybody mistrusts he

(ii) Prayer, Oct. 12, 1881, "*Saprema Swadhinata*"

cannot but go away. Why will he stay who has to suffer insults always, who receives no help or sympathy, no token of friendship and sweet words in seasons of sickness and bereavement? He will think he can do more work for Thee in a foreign country. He will go away even if all hold out threats for him. He who is going away leaves behind this lesson for us,—“you too will, some day have to go away like me. I am going in advance, you will have to follow me one by one.”

“O Merciful God, wonderful, indeed, is the doctrine of independence. I bow down to it; it is a heavenly doctrine. By virtue of it Jesus became great, John became great, ordinary men became great men. Almighty Lord, as the seeds sown so will the fruits be. We have not been born to listen to others. What is told us by others we do not believe in carrying it out to the full. Our belief having taken this turn has come to this pass that we will make ourselves free of everybody else. Our field of work, of spiritual culture and of missionary activity should be separate from that of the others; there

we will carry on according to our wishes, talents and individual will, that which we do not like we will never do, that which is contrary to our tastes we will never take up. Thus have we so long, O God, grown up to our present stature. Thus will we go to various countries for mission work. No one shall stand in our way. We are believers in independence; all should walk this way. By acting thus we will get results, and our religion will spread over the world.

“But, O Father, another, seed, that of love, was sown by the side of independence that also sprouted but it did not grow up. The seed of love was not nursed with proper care and it grew very slowly. A little lean, sapless thing, it could not lift up its head with so much vigour. Because of this (lack of love) one person (Rev. P. M. Chowdhury) cannot take his farewell with the loving blessings of the others. But he has set his heart on going. Mother, thy twin gifts of love and independence do not blend with each other in our lives. Therefore, we pray to thee, if we all

are to leave in this way and drift away from one another, then may we, at the time of parting at least part with loving embrace. Let him go, far from doing any harm it will add to our glory and greatness, and the New Dispensation will spread all over the world. But, O God, so ordain that at the time of parting may all take the name of the lord and fondly embrace one another. O, All Merciful Mother, we cherished the hope that one day our preachers will spread the new gospel in many lands. That hope, I see, is going to be fulfilled. But I plead again, let us not go out unloving and unloved. Having been together for twenty years, will they now part as adversaries? Can no one go out to preach unless actuated by ill-feeling? Can one not go abroad to preach unless one is persecuted, insulted and censured at home in Calcutta? Bless us that occasionally, we may take leave of one another in understanding love and go out to preach. May we, linked in love with one another, spread Thy Kingdom of love and Independence"

If this lack of love found only in

the case of one person had been the subject of this prayer, if it had never been seen in any other of the group there would have been no need to reproduce this long prayer. But its operation could be seen in a greater or lesser degree, in the lives of all his friends and it would be no exaggeration to say that its operation has not ceased even now. It should be mentioned here that the brother who went away without receiving the cordial greetings of his friends was warmly embraced by Keshub; and it was because of Keshub's attitude that he returned to Calcutta and lived as one of the old group. But for Keshub's warm embrace he would never have returned, for every arrangement was made for his staying abroad for good.

How wonderful is the magic influence of the times, of this age of independence. Not to speak of its effect on the learned and the literate, we have been struck dumb by noticing the effect of the modern cult of independence on even day labourers, porters, boatmen and others of the masses. Nobody likes to be talked to, nor would he mutely

subservient to anybody, each is his own master acknowledging no superior. From all sides comes this complaint. These characteristics of the new times people of the old school find it hard to tolerate. But they are powerless to resist this spirit and nurse their grievance in secret.

This spirit of passionate attachment to Independence is the forerunner of love, it is the harbinger of citizenship in Brindaban, the symbol of the earthly paradise of love. Those who have grasped the meaning of the present (New) Dispensation, only they can make this declaration of faith. Those whose spirits bow down in reverent recognition of the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit everywhere, who but they can do justice to the spirit of independence? There is no other way for the advent of love in humanity. It is easy to set oneself apart from the rest on seeing the operations of the Holy Spirit in himself; but to acknowledge its operations in others and through it to become united with them has not come to be an easy thing even up to the present

time. To become inebriated with the Holy Spirit and the flute of God the Lover, on hearing the music within oneself of the Divine Cowherd's flute is one thing, but for ten persons to become captivated at the same time is a different thing altogether. Those in whom this has become possible, they have become as of one family; nowhere else is it possible. This is the age of reintegration. of intuitive perception. The glory and sanctity of this age cannot make itself manifest in life unless men becoming independent themselves, and respecting the independence of others become subservient to God, and by virtue of that subservience becomes inwardly attached to one another. To those who understand this spiritual fact to them the union of heaven and earth is, certainly, not at all an impossible affair. This spiritual evolution has gone on in silence, and will go on in silence, here there can never be any room for ostentatious display. Spiritual union is a matter of rapt enjoyment, and the experience invariably brings on a state of raptness. In the wake of this mystic experience comes the

Kingdom of God. Blessed are they who
have experienced this and, beholding heaven,
have become enthralled by it !

ONE COMMUNITY

After the family comes the community (*dal*), each *individual* family is made up of father, mother, brothers and others. A number of such families taken together is designated a community. It may be taken for granted that where religion has established itself, the community-minded spirit has also made its appearance. The family and the community, they are interrelated and therefore, indispensable to each other. Who understood the importance of the community as Keshub did? Towards the end of his life he wrote to a friend of his. (G. G. Roy).

Himalaya (Simla)

August 2, 1883.

Choicest blessings for you. It does not become me to speak of whether you are at one with me or not in the spirit. This matter is not contingent on an answer

from me. It is to be intuitively visioned from manifest traits and expressions. Where my personality is rooted in union with the Divine, in my detachment and in my conduct, there is my character, my real being. Deep spiritual union with me can be realised in these terms only. Where these are lacking there may be love and passionate attachment for me but no union in spirit and in trusting faith are possible. As in all the members of the community as a whole, and in each of them individually, I behold some aspect of divinity, and the descent and indwelling of the Spirit, so you too will have to cultivate the same vision. To think that I exist as a separate individual apart from the community body is a fatal delusion; therefore, how is it possible to offer me your exclusive love and reverence? The community and myself form a single unit, a person embodied; and all together make up the New Dispensation. To look upon a single individual with contempt and irreverence is to disown me. I see no way of your getting me back (among you) except by taking the dust of the feet of every one,

and seeing the elect of God in every one. You will have to accept me by casting off your desirous impulses, and be friends of one another. Who among you are prepared for this? There is no way of approach to the leader of the community except through the community body.

The other way is that of cultivating mystic union. I believe that we all together are one!

Ever your Minister (Sevak)
Sri Ke—"

From one Himalayan town, Keshub wrote the above letter, from another Himalayan town he had offered the following prayer, a year ago :—

Darjeeling, July 5, 1882

"O God of the lowly, Thou who dost reward the sincere soul, I beg of you the gift of sincerity of spirit for myself and others. O Father, our faith must be sincere.

A. P. "*Dal Madhyabartita*", July 5, 1882

May none of us be guilty in the matter of faith. O Merciful God, deliver us, the disciples of the dispensation forthwith from the hell of unbelief. Do we wholeheartedly believe in your express injunctions? O Divine Preceptor, test each one of us again how much faith each has or has not. O God of Love, faith is the first thing needful. There can be no purity without this. There is no salvation without faith. We form a dispensation embodied in a group. We will believe in the Dispensation; there will be no discord among us. And we will have faith in that person from whom comes the message of the Dispensation. O Thou our last refuge, may friends and brethren, wife, children and family, none disbelieve the message bearer. The hell of unbelief is the most terrible of hells. We will believe this,—‘Thou’ and ‘I’, and the community as the intermediary: Who dare approach Thee, who does not believe in the community? Wonderful is this community body, knowledge coming in through some one, love of country through others, detachment through some, faith

through some of the others. I cannot let a single member be cut off from me. We need a community, we need a dispensation, and we need thy mediatorial mercy. It is like a chariot (an omnibus) in which we all travel together. Thou Merciful Lord, these people are intent on passing off their special brand of religion. They imagine they will each go their separate way to heaven holding on Thy hand. But Thou sayest, you shall not go by yourself by holding My hand. You shall have to take the help of your group associates. In this dispensation there is no *guru*, no infallible scripture. This time we have to be one with the fellowship, the fraternity, the community. Therefore I say, O God, give us faith. All are bent on quitting. each going his way by himself. There is no tender regard for the leader of the community, nor any love for the community. Under the circumstances the leader would be a deceiver, and the community would become an unmitigated evil. Thus O Lord, it looks as if the way of the community as the intermediary is being blocked.

Good and pious people are being turned away from the gate of heaven. The gate-keeper asks, where are your group associates? O God, it is unfaith which is working havoc among us. The way opened unto us by this Dispensation we have to follow in its entirety, we have to pay heed to every one in the community. O Merciful God bless us that, knit together with the community ordained by thee, we may go in a body to heaven. Lord of love, do favour us."

Keshub knew himself to be the leading spirit of the group. Mean-minded men may take this to be a device of Keshub to safeguard his own leadership. Was the leader subservient to his group, or was he the master, those who knew him personally would have no reason to entertain any doubt about him? How did he look upon his friends? As sent by God, as the field for the revelation of God's purposes. Keshub believed that even as inspirations come to him individually, so too they come through the community body. In the spiritual assembly (*Durbar*) whenever he put

forward any proposal of his own and some friend disapproved of it, he at once withdrew it. What does such conduct of his imply? That he gave the community the place of precedence (i) in his life. Therefore he said in his prayer,—“O Divine Mother, so long as I am in this community I can never become ease loving, lulled into a life of security. Thou hast placed us in the midst of an amazingly vigilant community where no one can get a testimonial certifying him as a saint (sadhu). I am saved from the clutches of a sycophantic group.....May we walk guardedly ruled by the controlling influence of the *Durbar* (apostolate) and become purified.” Why should he who is a leader harbour such sentiments? Because to him the community is not a secular body, but the field of God’s self revelations. Is this belief an unreasonable one, that those with whom God has brought us in spiritual union, and with whom we are always associated, that the God who indwells them should

(i) Acharyer Prarthana, “*Sri Durbarer shashana*,” March 20, 1883.

in spiritual union with the group manage all our affairs? What other means can God provide for them who have no infallible *Guru* or scripture, nor anyone to exercise authority over them? If there is no such provision for them then God may be said to be as good as half dead”.

Why did Keshub have such a high opinion of his community? Were the men of his fraternity so much superior to him that though their leader, he bowed his head before them? That he believed in some of his group associates as representatives of Christ and Moses, and that the Aryan Rishis and Maharshis dwelt in some of them, this belief was very natural and easy for him. This spiritual assembly of the New Dispensation was for him the meeting ground of heaven and earth. Therefore he said, “This is the time of the coming together of heaven and earth, it will pass away. Let these apostles now work like Jesus and Moses, they are not to busy themselves with anything else. No, no, no.” In this community apparatus Keshub used to receive messages from heaven which

he knew came 'for their sake'. In the *same prayer he says :- "O God, for Thy word to come to the earth means the coming of a new humanity, a new dispensation, a new code of morality, a new way of life. I firmly believe that the word of God has come to this earth, that it is reverberating with terrific force, that the word has been made flesh, and that it has entered into a community-body as a living entity. What is it, what does it say? It says 'walk this way': It says, 'Your preferences, your self-will pour them all into this new way of life....The New Dispensation cannot come to prevail except through the medium of this community. This apostolate is the channel for the coming of the new Dispensation. This sanctuary, then, is greater than Benares, Sri Brindaban, Jerusalem....From the roof of this sanctuary one can see, as through a telescope, what is going on in heaven, what Jesus, Moses, Sri Gauranga, and the yogis and rishis are doing. Exceedingly wonderful is this sanctuary, this

A. P. "*Dalayantre Shabda Sravan*"
 March 8, 1883.

group. These few together form that telescope. This group is of one piece, an instrument for listening to the voice of God."

This apostolate—with what characteristic traits did he wish to see it endowed? The following prayer shows it:— (14.5.82)

"That a family free from all contention may grow up,—it is for this that I have myself partaken of the fare of fiery asceticism, that I have refrained from wine and meat. That my body has become feeble is because of my labours in building up this community. O Lord, there is no rest for me till this group-life comes to be better: make this unhappy group a happy one. I had wanted such a group as would make me rest in the bosom of God. I had wanted a group which though having nothing goes through the world always with a smile on its lips like a *Sadashiva*. I had wanted a group whose face would bear the imprint of Thy likeness. Not till his hunger is satisfied will this poor man cease shedding tears. O God, a goodly number have come to me"

but that happy face I have not seen^c that happy family I have not come across with whom I may go on conversing about Thee. I had hoped that when they become true men, when they have attained their majority I would bring them over to Thee. I do not want to listen to anything else. I want to see Thy household put in order. Lord, where are those chosen few whom I am looking for? On what hill retreat or cave dwelling are they? This man (referring to himself), Thou knowest very well, does not want to live apart from his group. Morning or night, whenever I meet them, they do not speak of things of good cheer, they talk rot, they talk of their wordly affairs. The group I have been praying for has not materialised. O God, deliver me from my anguish and affliction. If it is one trial out of ten I will, with bent head, bear up with it, I will not, of course, lay the responsibility on Thee. I want to see happiness prevailing between the two, between the Father on one side and the son on another. Whenever a fruit is brought to me I take only half a slice, never all of it. Failing to

cool my fevered brow on the arid wilderness of the world I seek shelter under the tree of God's chosen devotees. Lest it cannot be had on the lower level of the plains I have come up here on the hills. If I do not get it on earth I will go to heaven, If I cannot get it in company with others, I will carry on my practices alone. O God, the pangs of hunger lead one to take to stealing and robbery; I have come to you for this purpose. I have come to take away the saints, I have come to carry away Christ and Moses. I need only five men, I have not found them yet. Mother, I want to hear from Thee the deep hidden secrets of the spirit. He speaks the truth who says, this man (referring to himself) brings new and fresh messages from heaven. While those who speak of me as a great man, a leader, I do not want to hear their words. O Lord, the occupation, the status that Thou hast given me, I want that and nothing else. Have I come how to teach people and prepare them to go out to preach at ten different places? Am I a deceitful person?"

Those who caused him so much sorrow and suffering why this agonising, Herculean effort to win them over? He could have given them up and tried to get others. These men have been brought to him by God,—this belief gave him no end of trouble up to the last. That those whom he has been looking for are to be found among them is brought out in this prayer:-

“O Friend of the lowly, the Happiness of the sorrowing, the Hope of the despairing, the Light in the midst of darkness and the New Life for the dead. We each one of us, are two selves dwelling in one person. The role of one is almost played out; there is still a little time left for the play of the other to begin. The self that is mine, the ego, its days are numbered, the self that is Thine the hour of its birth is at hand. In this casket (of the body) there is another creature, this self, this bird has yet another egg to bring forth. How will the self,—the man that is Thine be released?

A. P. “*Nutan Dal*”, April 25, 1882.

All the materials needed in the New Dispensation are present in this community body; but it works to no purpose, O God, when wilt Thou bring out Thy new group from out of the old? We of to-day are surely not the group elect of the Lord. So Thy gatekeeper drove us away saying—“you are not the new community, you all are selfish people, get out”. O Lord, what is the reason of this refusal, the cause of this rejection? A voice from heaven says:— ‘you are not the people, but within you are wholly different types of men who if they come out will be welcomed as men of the New Dispensation? Ah! so we will have to die to pass away, be burnt up and disowned. For we are not the right type. But there is another self within our bosom which says; ‘I am an elect’. O God, who will explain to us the inner meaning of the mystery of what is the Kingdom of heaven like? It is the inner man, the Self who will clear up the mystery. Incubated by the heat of the time spirit, the human egg hatched, and the new man comes out flying. In the unclean, unconsecrated body slumbers the elect

of God. In the repudiated, disowned body slumbers the rishi, the seer, who is sure to be accepted. O God, not till this self, the new man appears can we enter Thy household. O God, he who is hidden within, call him forth to come into Thy sanctum. O God, call Thy own child Thyself. We know we are not the ones after Thy heart. This our body of sin cannot take part in the New Dispensation. The innermost man can come out only when invoked during the tranced communion of Yoga. O Divine Mother, call him with Thy sweet voice. From the Green Room in the spirit world let the superb characters, dressed in *gala* costume, emerge and play their part on the stage. Bless us that we may, without delay, denying ourselves, call those new born spirits to come in a body from within, and keep them captive at Thy feet. Bless us."

Keshub said he had sold himself at three places,—his God, his country, and his community; this is not tall talk, his whole life bears witness to it. For the sake of truth no one dare deny how overwhelming

was his desire to recognise and to arouse the slumbering self of the members of his community, and dwell with them forever in the house of God. The concluding years of his life were an irrefutable proof of this fact.

That not he alone but the community is the root of the New Dispensation is clearly shown in the following resolution at the conference of the Missionary Body:—
 “In connection with the question of obedience to the Church or the Dispensation I am not speaking of disagreement on points of doctrine or on differences in spirit. If one of us goes to preach at Madras why should we not think that we also have gone with him? Each one should think ‘I have also gone,’ We need the faith which says,—I am the other, the other is me. Where the New Dispensation is concerned no one can remain isolated all by himself. As it happens, one member takes his stand in the centre, and a few others join him. Just as the sun and the moon rise in the heavens, subject to law, so is our dispensation ruled by law, not an isolated supernatural event.

A dispensation comes into being when ten or twelve people get together. It is just like the solar system with the sun, the planets and their satellites. Dispensation means totality,—the sum total of all, one person, one belief, one but not uniform. I pin my faith on the pledge, "I in you, you in me". The wheel is made up of the rim, the spokes, all taken together, Bhakti sets one's heart upon the person. It will not do for us to have simply Bhakti, in the abstract, as impersonal, we have to have fact".

One Kingdom of Heaven

The prayer, "A Picture of Heaven", shows what was the ideal of heaven enshrined within his heart.

*"O Lord of compassion, O God of beauty, my one desire is to love Thee and do Thy will. O Heart's Delight, my desire is to rejoice with Thee. Thy saints in heaven how they enjoy themselves. They are singing at the top of their voice in all the seven notes. What activity, what enthusiasm among them! Here we are as if in dead slumber. There flows the fountain of holy rejoicings. How many kinds of festivities! Drinking of wine is one,—the drinking of the wine of love and holiness. Jesus gives to Gouranga the chalice of the wine of holiness, Gouranga gives to Jesus the goblet filled with the elixir of delight-in-God's-name. Running about merrily is another sport. Jesus runs towards Moses, Moses towards Jesus; and the two embrace each other. Thy little children in heaven, they are playing hide-

*A. P. "*Swargar Chawi*" June 13, 1882

and-see, and running about. Thy devotee boys and holy virgins, they are engaged in sports. There is great festivity among them. All the devotees are racing as to who will touch the flag first. How all those who are watching, expressing their delight for the winner! They cry out blessed, blessed art thou, son of God! Jesus wins the flag touching race, and stands smiling. Some are singing, some playing on musical instruments and how many and diverse are the instruments! Some are dancing with hands upraised. What delightful dances! Mother Divine, Thy loving children are just like lovely dolls. Thy heaven looks more like a playground than a heaven. Thou art spending Thy days with them in sports and amusements. The rishis, they do not sleep all the time. No, what activity and enthusiasm; it is as if the whole of heaven is all a-tremble. What tumultuous display of the sport of swinging and dancing in a circle! They are spraying one another with the saffron dust of joy. O Lord of Love this picture is very beautiful. We want that this picture may be

realised in our hearts, in its pristine purity. May the heavenly hosts descending into our hearts carry on their sports. We do not want the dry-as-dust, worthless heaven of make-believe. O God, make this picture come true. Kindly favour us that this picture of heaven, with the dance of the celestial beings may be literally reproduced in our hearts, and the vision make us holy and happy."

What is the meaning of the saying, 'Lo, heaven is not here or there, it is in the heart', just as God's manifestation is in the heart so also is heaven manifested in the heart. Why is the place of manifestation the same in both cases? Even as the objects of the sense world obscure the vision of God so also is the vision of heaven obscured. Even as God-vision is wholly spiritual so is the vision of heaven also spiritual. Just as the belief in God is an indispensable truth so too is belief in heaven. The human race constituted as it is now, none can regard it as heaven; inasmuch as envy, hatred and other passions, at variance with the spirit of

God, hold sway over it. This state of godlessness will not go on forever; there will come a time when the earth will be like unto heaven. It is for this reason that heaven is looked upon as a thing of the future and not of the present. Those who having seen God have eliminated all untoward feelings from the heart, they see, by the grace of God, the picture of heaven within, and set about with enthusiasm to reproduce it in their own life and in the life of others. So heaven is set before us as an ideal to be lived by us. Just as God is real, so is this ideal of heaven real. Therefore believers in God proclaim in perfect trust fullness the message of heaven along with that of faith in God. If with the passing of time this ideal had not become a reality to a few people on this earth, then it would have been a confirmation of the view that the believers live all the time in an illusory world and not a real one. Jesus, the Son of God, preached the gospel of God and His Kingdom with unflinching courage, and for this the wicked world took his life. He demonstrated the truth of his message by sacrificing

his life, and hundreds of men, emboldened by his example, cherished the hope of the coming of the Kingdom in their hearts and without demur offered their lives as an oblation to the ordeal of fire. Even as the direct vision of God is a matter of enjoyment, sweeping away from our hearts all fear, worry and perverse thoughts, so is our experience of heaven. How natural is it to sacrifice one's life with the consciousness of heaven's felicity filling the heart, is seen in the following extract from his prayer:—

*“Why go outside to look for hell; why again, go outside to look for heaven? They are all within the heart. O Mother, if I want to consort with you I can do it right here; I can consort with the gods of heaven right here and now. Yoga and Bhakti are both realisable right here in this body. The instant we close the eyes we get a vision of Brindaban (heaven on earth) within. The fires of hell are also within this body. Rouse the evil passions and you have hell within.

*A. P.—“*Deher Madhya swarga darshan*”

Oct. 6, 1881.

What an incredible thing, both heaven and hell are within ourselves! The keys of both are in our hands. When I am an unbeliever, an atheist, a sinner, it is as if I am wallowing in hell. Everything is within this bodily frame. The cauldron of sin is kept boiling all the time, I have but to wish and I can throw myself into it. Again, heaven is also within it, so that I have but to wish and I can get into it. The abode of the gods, of the divinities, of Love's Paradise (Brindaban) all are within. You ascend to the heights and you are in heaven; you descend to the depths below and you are in hell. As for the soul, it keeps going up and down all the time. When I am up on the heights that, which is down below, sinks into oblivion. I forget food and drink, I am immersed in the rapture of communion, floating on the stream of love and compassion. Holding God to my heart I abide in Him. What happiness, what felicity to have Him at once as the dweller in the heart as well as the dweller in the body!"

In the present age Herbert Spencer, who occupies a preeminent position in the

world of science and philosophy says: "the heaven and hell of the scientists are not fantasies but real." You have but to wish and you are in heaven or hell. There is no doubt that he said this as a seer of truth. How rapturous was Keshub's expectation of the Kingdom of God is amply shown in the following prayer :—

"O Lord of Mercies, Thou Indwelling Spirit, the leading spirits have always proclaimed,—the Kingdom of Heaven is coming, coming soon.' But it certainly has not come as yet. There have been some who in solemn accents shook the world, announcing as if it is coming in a day or two. 'Lo, it comes, it comes' but it did not come. If it had come it would have been well, we would not have to live a life of sin. If this Kingdom had been established all over the world, we would have had no further cause of worry. How many yogis, rishis, and founders of religion saw it coming with the eye of faith. They must also have seen it coming; if not

A. P. "*Swargarajyer Ashay Ullas*", April
22, 1882.

did they concoct a story out of nothing?
 Did they, out of compassion for suffering
 humanity, say, 'better; happier days are
 coming'? Or did they really see something
 more? They must have lived on a much
 higher plane to have really seen it coming
 And they had seen it because faith makes
 the remote look nearer. O Lord, they felt
 it so near that they could stretch their hands
 and, as it were, grasp it. But, these, only
 these, saw it. The world never did. O Lord
 and Saviour, Thou didst make us dream
 dreams, and conjure up visions of bliss, but
 did'st not let the Kingdom come true. The
 Kingdom of Heaven came to them, but the
 world was not prepared for it, therefore, it
 went back. There is a vast sea separating
 the seers from the people of the world. The
 world was left behind where it was. O
 unlucky world, it fell to your lot to see the
 Kingdom of Heaven come again and again
 yet you did not get it; the Goddess of
 Fortune who had offered herself to you, you
 spurned. Jesus and Gouranga held it before
 you, but you did not accept it. We, too
 have so often thought that the Kingdom of

Heaven is coming, is almost at hand, and yet it did not come. O Mother loving, why were we permitted to see it, why were we visited with such a dream, and why was it snatched away from us? O God, why does it come at all and why does it get away? Lord, the New Dispensation came, but why is it that the Kingdom of Heaven did not come with it? Lord, those very men are here, all else are where they used to be, but it is a pity no one ever says now, as they did in days gone by, that the Kingdom of Heaven is coming. On the contrary, they say, it will be enough and to spare if we somehow just manage to scrape through the brief span of our earthly existence, Fie, fie! O God, come, and stir up the bright flame of hope in our hearts. Let us sing Thy name with a hundred throats. We will establish the Kingdom of the New Dispensation on this earth. Mother, why has our laughter ceased? Why does the lion slumber? O Mother, who sustains the universe and dispenses salvation, where hast Thou hid Thyself? Come out but once. Give us a fore

glimpse of the Festive Fair (*Ananda Bazar*). Bless us that we may pretty soon get a fore-glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven and rejoice with exceeding joy."

How blessed is the enjoyment of this heaven we find from this prayer:

"O Friend of the Lowly, who dost bring the enemy under control, Thou hast indeed, brought a religion of sublime bliss for poor people like us. O God, even as Thou art sweet Thyself, so is this religion of Thine. We are doubly blessed, first, in Thyself and, secondly, in Thy religion, After participating in this game of religion for twenty five years, we have come to realise that it is a very delectable experience. The world has, indeed, plenty of perils and trials, but they are not of the kind as would make us say,—we are miserable." When we go to school for our training, we have to take pains to learn, but they are not such as we would call them afflictions. In religion the disciplines form part of the code of conduct, of morality. But the happieess that has come to us, that also we have to acknowledge. We have

become partial to the New Dispensation ; call it bigotry or not. We will love Thee for Thy sake, and, again, for the sake of Thy religion, dispensed by Thee. There is no other religion to compare with this ! O Thou Divine Indweller, we say this in all sincerity of heart, that in the new worship (*upasana*) of the New Dispensation, every word exudes the sweet nectar of heaven. Everything in it is good, O Thou, God of Brindaban, we are convinced that Thou wilt make every one happy. Else why hast Thou blessed us with so much happiness. Every member of the household, wherever he happens to be, is blessed on account of this worship. O God, every time that Thy hand is placed on our head as a token of blessing, we feel like dancing in joy. Such is the fascinating power of this religion that tranquillity reigns even in the innermost parts of the body. O Infinite Compassion, make us drunk with this happiness. May this experience purify us. May we spend the rest of our lives drinking this new wine of the Spirit ! Thy New Dispensation may well be called the dispensation of rejoicing. As we repeat the words of the benediction, 'Peace', 'Peace', 'Peace' Peace fills the innermost parts of our being.

Bless us that, abiding in Thy household, we may enjoy the blessing of heaven, the blessing of the New Dispensation and attain holiness!"

We are reproducing some more extracts from the writings of Keshub's closing years:—

(i) "Foolish sons of Bharat, What! you will not call on God, the Mother? Arise, awake, brothers, exert yourselves. O Mother, the days of rejoicing have come, grieve no more. Let us clean the house and spread the carpet. I will cry aloud from the top of the Himalayas, brothers, sisters, come, our days of rejoicing have come. Mother, when you come we shall welcome you, waving the plateful of offerings before Thee; and seating Thee on the throne of the world, worship Thee. Mother, even as Thy *mandir* is erected on the Himalayas, so will I establish Thy *mandir* on earth. Mother, 'when I go to the other world I shall see how the great ones of the earth are worshipping my Mother. Now we are worshipping Thee in this small room, afterwards, in the future, great kings and emperors will enthrone Thee as their sovereign. The time is coming when men and women saints

will worship Thee with their families. Yet I say, blessed are we, for, we are the first to call Thee, and worship Thee with our family",

(ii) "O Merciful God, King of Heaven, the picture that Thou hast painted within my heart, I do not see anything resembling it in the world outside. When will the picture in my mind be reproduced outside? Lord, one kind of picture within, another kind outside. How captivating is the picture of the Kingdom of Heaven Thou hast portrayed in the heart of the heavenly-minded ! When I have nothing else to do, I look at it intently, and in imagination wander about the fairyland of the future. When the world harasses me I turn my eyes to the Kingdom to come. When the practisants and the devotees around me quarrel among themselves, I retire within and feast my eyes on the household of peace. When I am troubled in mind, then I ascend to the summit of the Himalayas and tranquilize my mind with the cooling breeze of the heights. O God ! as for me, I find that everything I require is

A. P. "Satyayuger Samagama", May 27, 1883.

already within me; but the outer world is so very different. What a vast difference between the two worlds, the inner and the outer! Within the heart they are walking about with their arms around each other's shoulder, laughing merrily. O Mother, since Thou hast established the Kingdom of Love within, do establish it in the world also. Let us at least have a glimpse of it in parts. We clasp Thy feet in supplication. We have waited these many years. If we could but see only one-sixteenth of what is revealed within! If there had been no revelation, within what would we have done? Therefore, is it we say that Thou hast kept prepared such a place for us, that we could go there and find happiness in times of sorrow and trial. Here, there is always union of souls. Now that the New Dispensation has come do please, Mother Darling, start the work of reconciliation here and now. That union is not to be seen outside. Do please begin it in our family and household. Then will Thy Kingdom of Love spread like wild fire and go raging over the country. Lord, dost Thou not wish that Thy Kingdom be established on earth? Certainly, it is Thy wish. O Lord

tell everybody that they may hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God. Our hearts pine for the coming of this Kingdom. May we not hide Thy Kingdom within ourselves! May we be able to establish it outside. And seeing it, and hearing the shouts of joy from men and women, may we be happy and holy”

There was a time when the practisants practised God-vision in their hearts by themselves, enjoyed heaven by themselves. But a single individual does not make up heaven. It is the totality of a large number of persons, hence, it goes by the name of the Kingdom of Heaven. As the experience of enjoyment deepened, the desire that others may share this experience also increased. If it has not happened here, it has happened elsewhere. The devotees of foreign lands, who saw the Kingdom of Heaven stirring in their hearts, set out to proclaim the coming of that Kingdom with intense zeal, so that others also may enjoy it. With the coming of Jesus, the Son of God, in this land, this

A. P. “Swarga-rajya”, June 16, 1883.



Sri Chaitanya

feeling has taken possession of the hearts of the Aryan devotees also. With the predominance of this feeling, even the system of spiritual culture has undergone a change. Formerly spiritual culture was individualistic, now it has become the rule to practise religion in organised groups. The spiritual culture, that was instituted during the time of Sri Chaitanya, was a group culture for the attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven. At the present time there has been such a predominance of this type of culture, that the practisants, as a rule, are partial to this type. From whom has this culture been received? From Maharshi Isha, the Son of God. From the day that the Brahmo Samaj preached the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, from that day the Son of God became the central figure in the Brahmo Samaj. He is not a true disciple who does not become one with him, from whom he learns his spiritual lessons. The day that Keshub, becoming one with all mankind, assumed a supra-individual personality, that day he became one with Jesus. In the process of becoming one, one has, first, to become one

with those by whom he is surrounded; afterwards when he has become an adept in this field, his union with humanity at large is effected. That this union was effected in Keshub, is known from his own words. Who else can proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, but he in whom this union has been effected? Since the New Dispensation is nothing else but this Kingdom of Heaven on earth, we can very well understand what should be the subject-matter of the spiritual culture and the preaching of the believer of the New Dispensation. Keshub has shown the way or process of a new yōgā by becoming one with Jesus, and thereby with the whole of humanity. And through the spiritual power of the New Dispensation, Keshub became one with those of his group, who represented the spirit of Buddha and other great men. Therefore, in the resolution of the Missionary Conference, (i) he has said.—“One person stands in the centre, and a few others (ii) come to

(i) November 29, 1880

(ii) October 31, 1882

join him". And, again, he has said in his prayer, "I want to merge myself with my group in Thee, O God, as one embodied soul".

After his death the Sri Durbar, having made a special provision in the Mandir, as part of the congregational worship, has made it easy for the community to cultivate personal union with Keshub. This cultivation of personal union is the culture of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The New-World Home.

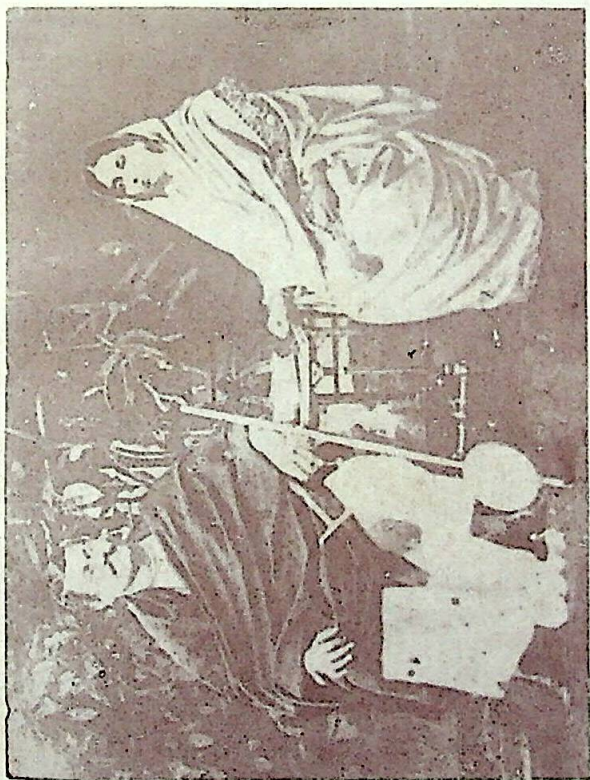
The state, the household or family and the world,—in all these, God and His children dwell together all the time. The provision or law is that, instead of dwelling apart from one another, they should dwell together in God. This new-world home is one in which the spirit of union (yoga) is predominant. Kushub prays:-

(i) "O Perfect Love, we are not doomed to die, we are destined to live. Lord, our hope is we are not taking leave of our homes to depart to the cremation ground. Where shall we go? Why shall we suffer annihilation? God will grant us our boon, we will have a family, we will be given a new-world home, and we will be happy. Do Thou but put new life into us and we will live. Abandoning the old delapidated house Thou wilt offer us a new home. Flinging away the dried flower-wreath Thou wilt put a garland of fresh flowers round our neck. Thou wilt make a clean sweep of all the godless things

(i) A. P. "Samsare Yoga", September 7, 1883

in the household. Then we will not have to touch anything, tainted by worldliness. Whatever we now touch will be Thine. In this dispensation even a bit of a tooth-pick is filled with God. Touched by God, all things become holy. O God of Mercy, that household which is set up by Thee. Thou dost want to put us there. Thou dost not want to keep us any more in the rubbish-heap of the world. A golden mansion wilt Thou build for us. At Thy touch everything will be made holy. But the world does not know as yet the kind of life this holds before us. That household where God is in the earthen-pot; in even the oil and clarified butter that the world has yet to see. We have cast Thee out of our daily bread, our rice and pulses, our eatables. There is, verily, this kind of a world,—a heavenly household of a world. Thou hast with great care beautified such a world with lovely things, filling it with a variety of treasures and precious objects, waiting for the men of the New Dispensation to come and occupy it. From the morning breakfast to the time of retiring at night, whatever I touch and handle is all surcharged with God.

O Lord of life, this heaven on earth is yet far off. The heaven that is in the hills and forests seems near at hand. But the other heaven, which I want to touch, is a long way off, and it seems as if I am repulsed as I draw near it. Every room I enter is brilliantly illuminated. As I take up the broom for sweeping, the Living God takes hold of my right hand and slips His hand into mine. When we have a household of this kind filled with God, then we will be able to understand what a beautiful surprise He has prepared for us. When Thou, O God, standest, lighting up the whole scene I will bow to Thee in loving devotion. Like unto what will that experience of Bhakti be, I cannot comprehend now. When better days come, I will sit down before God in that happy home and have my fill of this supernal beauty. I am spellbound so much that I feel I am not in the world, neither do I want to get away from it. And yet dwelling in Thy world, wholly absorbed in rapturous yoga, seeing Thee in every object, beholding Thy divinity mirrored in its multitudinous forms everywhere, may we be happy and holy!"



Keshub Chunder Sen

Jagannohini (His Wife).

Here is another prayer, showing that it is the life-work of the devotees, to live in the world, building up small families around them.

“Thou Heavenly Father, King of the Himalayas, our worries and anxieties have not yet ended, and yet we wish to rejoice in Thee. We take our rambles on the hills, and yet carry the burden of sorrows and afflictions in our hearts, and if we meet with manifold trials we look to Thee to keep us happy, in spite of them. When we are broken-hearted we turn to Thee, calling Thee Mother, for if Thy devotee cannot show himself calm and patient in trials how will ordinary people conduct themselves? O Lord of life, how strange and sweet are the dispensations of Providence, discovered in Thee! We chant Thy name, O Lord, in the midst of the world's sorrows and tribulations. If the burden weighs us down, as if it were the Himalaya mountain, Thou, O Surmounter of *Govardhan* (the name of a hillock in Brindaban), he, who professes to be Thy devotee, will lift it up on, the tip of his little finger. God takes upon

Himself the task of bearing their burden. With patience, fortitude, peace, forgiveness filling their hearts, the devotees show the power of Bhakti. May we also, when beset by manifold trials and calamities, show in our life the power of Bhakti! Stationed on these heights, let us play the game, morning and evening, as to who can carry on his shoulder the burden of this world, who can lift up mountains on his little finger. If the devotee, knowing that all happiness is in Thy keeping, fails to get hold of it — what hope is there left for him? Thy devotees will lift up a mountain each, and will never flinch, nor faint. Finding Thee close at hand, we will cast all our burdens on Thee. We will learn from Thee how to lift up mountains. The Divine Mother, how She carries this vast universe! We will learn of Her how to carry our little mountains. If we are down and out when trials befall us, we will not be able to take Thy name. May we, with ease, shoulder heavy burdens, bear up with all indignities, and become holy and happy. Bless us!." *

* A. P. "Giridharna", May 6, 1883.

Not managing our affairs ourselves, but letting God manage them, and live in this transformed world,—this is the ideal life for the householder of this new order. His blessedness consists in enjoying the vision of this new world order, this new world home. Here is another prayer :—

(i) “Thou Ocean of Compassion, the presiding Deity of the household, this world-home is Thine. Do Thou run it according to Thy own will. Let us watch Thy work. We have clean forgotten that there is righteousness in the world, that Thou art in it. That Thou art with us during worship, is easily understandable. But it is very hard to understand that Thou art also in household things like rice and pulse. With devotional fervour to sing Thy praises, and place our offering of flowers at Thy feet, is easy. But to see Thee in our food is a very difficult thing. Our store-room is godless, so is our dining-room and bed-room. Which dispensationist, which devotee sees Thee in these things all through the twenty-four hours? For twenty-five years I have lived the life of a householder, and I

have not seen the presiding Deity of the house (Lakshmi). Who else can run Her household? Mother, Thou alone canst do it. Which of Thy devotees have run their household, taking Thee along with them? I do not see them anywhere. Only rishis like Janak Raja have seen Her presiding over their household. As for us, who cares for Lakshmi? If the stomach is full nothing else matters. Mother Lakshmi, we have left the goddess of the household down in the plains to look for the goddess of forest-retreats here. But here, too, Thou hast given us the slip. Failing to manage our household down below, we have come up to the hills, but here, too, we have not found Thee. Greatly do I wish that this household be Thine. Our household shall never be Godless. Mother, what iniquity have we perpetrated that sin and greed should also reign here! Mother, perhaps, it is because we have not offered worship to Thee as our household Deity from our earlier years, but worshipped Thee alone as the God of the skies as the God of the Vedas and the Puranas. O God, be kind to me, let not the house of Thy devotee be Godless. Mother, this household of ours will be a

golden one. My Mother, She does everything. I will no more put my trust in man, but trust only Thee, Thy wish is that my house and belongings all become Thine. Thou canst do all things. If Thou canst not win Thy way in the house of Thy devotee where else canst Thou have Thy way. Here Thou art free to exercise Thy powers. How Thou dost manage his affairs, smiling all the while! Do Thou fulfil the long cherished desire of my heart. In Thy household none dare be greedy or envious. The other world is yet to come, let me see Thee here. Do Thou decorate my house with flowers from heaven. Watching Thee sweep the rooms, we will obtain salvation; watching Thee do the cooking, we will attain heaven. Bless us that we may discard the world of old as of no spiritual worth and establish the house of God." *

What disciplines are to be taken up to be able to live in this world? The extinction of all ulterior desires!

This is laid down in the following prayer:—

"Thou Saviour of the Humble,

A. P. "Devi Lakshmi", May 16, 1883.

Thou Dispenser of Salvation, there must be the cord which binds, the ties which keep people together. But new cords and new ties are wanted. From the day that Thou didst bring us into the Brahmo Samaj, Thou didst enjoin on us not to leave the world, but to practise religion in the home. But Thy injunction is that we are not to perpetuate the unholy worldly ties of *maya*. Thou dost want each one of us to become a *faquir*, that is, to have no worldly ties, to tear off the bonds of *maya*, and to bind ourselves with the golden chains of heaven's truth. It sounds easy enough to listen to, but there is something in it very difficult of accomplishment. When with the sword of conscience we try to sever the bonds, it cuts to the quick. We find the bonds of desirousness intertwined with our very vitals. To disentangle them means tearing the heart to pieces. Thou sayest, let the ties stay, only let new ties be substituted in place of the old".*

What matters it if it brings pain ?
 What matters it if this ordinance of God

A. P. "Sav nutan hoiya asibe", June 8, 1880.

seems very cruel, indeed? The Deity is never satisfied till a man—the old man—is sacrificed. When the bonds of *maya* are all severed, everything will come back transformed and will work in our favour. Therefore, Keshub concludes his prayer with these words.

“Formerly everybody turned into enemies, now they have become friends. They will teach me to recite the name of God, teach me to practise detachment, teach me by persuasion to become religious. The household, which God sanctifies, can never become a breeding ground of poison, of evil. But where the wooden stock for sacrificing human victims is set up, that place of horror, do Thou see us through. We have to pass through the painful ordeal once, then every thing will be all right. There, at the sacrificial altar everybody weeps, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, the desires within, all weep and wail. But as soon as the weeping stops then the whole family, even the blood stream start, rejoicing”.

Now the household, that is set up, is the new household of the New Dispen-

sation. The mistress of this household is the Divine Mother Herself.

Keshub says in his prayer :

(i) Mother Divine, whatever is unsubstantial in this house, do Thou throw away, so that it will be a sanctified house, a holy family, a home of true friends,—everything in it precious and real, My soul, rejoice, play on the flute! In accord with the psalmist David sing the praises of God. Mother, may Thy son not remain a slave of the unreal and ungodly, Bless us.*

*A. P. "Sarratna Sadhan", Nov. 13, 1881

Husband-Wife

Family, community, heaven, the world, lest all these terms become meaningless, we have to consider the net-work of diverse relationships, which make these groups possible.

First of all, we would take up the relationship of husband and wife, inasmuch as it is the root of all kinds of relationships, which prevail in the world. We ought to know, first of all, the inner meaning of why, in the new Dispensation, the relationship of husband and wife is based on the principle of world renouncement. Very few of the people of this country know that the Aryan rishis of old started their life with the discipline of "Brahma-faring" (*Brahmacharya*), and ended their life in the practice of *Brahmacharya*. It cannot be said that the study of the Vedanta philosophy has disappeared from this country. But very few are aware of the fact that in ancient times householders living in the world, not only devoted themselves to the study of the Vedanta but moulded their lives according to the principles

of this philosophy. But it is a misfortune, that with the lapse of time the study of the tenets of the Vedanta, having slipped away from the hold of the house holders, has become the monopoly of wandering mendicants. Consequently, the Aryan people have forgotten all about the sovereign role, which the discipline of "Brahms-faring" plays in all human relationships, in conformity with the canons of the Vedanta. In this matter the researches of the Aryan scholars of other lands, following the lead of the Hindu mendicant class, have also passed by the deeper teaching of the Vedanta concerning the religion of the householder. We have been frightened by the little that the world of science has made known to us about the evil effects resulting from an ignorance of the deeper teaching of Brahma-faring. Convinced that there is no possibility of eradicating the evil from human society without the re-establishment of the *Brahmacharya* enjoined by the Vedanta, we are striving hard to place on the highest pedestal the relationship of husband and wife in the present dispensation, which is based on *the disciplined life of*

renunciation. Our hope is that the husband and the wife, who do not do anything in their domestic life without seeking the will of God and following it, to them the deeper knowledge of Brahma-faring will not remain hidden.

We know that even the men of our fold will look with derision on my speaking of the *predominance of Brahmacharya* in the conjugal relationship. But how can we say that because they belong to our fold, therefore, their spirit eye has opened? It is not possible for every one to leave the rut of conventional conduct, if they do not surrender themselves wholly into the hand of God. It is a matter of congratulation to us that it does not matter even if there be found very few among us who, having started their conjugal relationship under the discipline of *Brahmacharya*, are resolved to observe it in all the relations of life. This clear conviction should be in us all, that none but those, who are willing to work out the will of God in their lives, can keep the vow of *Brahmacharya*. This fact will be recognised by all

from the following prayer of Keshub:

* "Bless us that we may belong to the family of Thy ascetic householders. May the rest of our lives be spent as male and female mendicants! The world awaits in the hope of seeing groups of ascetic couples establish that new world home. We want to see how the spirituality of ascetics in forest retreats enters the threshold of the home. Four hundred years ago the mendicant (Sri Chaitanya), leaving behind wife and mother, went away from Navadwip to Puri. O' God, tell us how the car, once again, returns, rejoicing homeward, bearing the flag symbolic of a new civilization! Lord, Thou hast inscribed the chronicle of the car, proceeding on its outward bound journey. Wilt Thou not now write about the journey of the reversed car homeward bound? Thou hast spoken of those who left the world. Wilt Thou not now speak of those who have come back? Thou hast spoken of those who went into exile. Wilt Thou not speak of those who have returned? The mendicants who are unmarried,

* A.P.— "Sannyasi O'Sanyasiri" April 14, 1882

or those of them who have left wife, family, home,—the world has heard enough of such. Now the world wants to see renunciation practised right at home in the family, in the midst of wife and children. This time show us how new couples of ascetic householders rear up their children, and make a heaven of earth. Here neither greed, nor anger, neither envy nor conceit disturb the atmosphere of the home. Here the acquisition and handling of money does not do any harm; it is as if they are bits of straw. O Lord, recount to us the tale of the female mendicant. For the tale told was but half of the whole; a half-told tale is very distressing. The car which left Navadwip did not turn homeward, the darling of the family did not return, Will the lonely wife, Vishnupriya, weep for ever? Lord, it is but natural that after the departure comes the return, after the disappearance from view comes the reappearance—after separation comes reunion, after the old dispensation, comes the new. That home-leaving, which does not end in home-coming and reunion, is an inauspicious start.

Eighteen hundred years ago Jesus, on the eve of his departure said. 'I will send you the comforter'. But, alas, the comforter did not come. Jesus was to have come as the bridegroom, and the world was to marry him. But no sign as yet of the coming bridgeroom. Is it because no auspicious day could be found? Ah, our rishis, who came to attend the marriage ceremony, had to go away, convinced that the world is of no spiritual worth. They retired into the forest, intent upon achieving individual salvation. Is not the male mendicant entitled to have a female mendicant? Cannot the male ascetic have a female ascetic? At this juncture the nineteenth century comes as a match maker to arrange a marriage for the mendicant. Where is the maiden who has it written on her forehead, that she is destined to be a mendicant? Thou, God of Mercies this time Thou hast ordained that the husband and wife should enter into this kind of a marriage relationship. The car, which used to carry the lonely mendicant, that car has returned empty. The car arranged for the journey this time carries the mendicants, man and woman, seated side by side. This

time the rishi bridegrooms, putting on new garments, are entering the world anew. Blessed, then, is this car. O God, bless us that at this appropriate time, taking the vow of conjugal chastity, and thus, effecting an union between detachment and domestic life, we may be happy and holy."

What is the result of such a vow towards the close of Keshub's earthly career, may be gathered from the following prayer:

* "O Thou, Friend of the lowly, the saviour of *the fallen, at the close of my life, resolved* to part with worldly ties, we have, at Thy command and by Thy grace, come to take this vow enjoined by Thee. This vow is a solemn one, more solemn than the most solemn of vows. This vow one can take only if Thou dost empower him; otherwise if one tries for ten thousand years it cannot be taken. In this vow there is renouncement of attachments of all worldly

A.P. "Yugalvrata Grahan", October, 29, 1882.

hings. It is a special vow. This is a vow, meant for the afternoon of life. This vow brings one in more intimate relationship with the other world. This vow is of a much more concentrated form than any other vows. Mother, after wandering for years in and out of the heat and glare of the world's ways, the tired husband in the afternoon of life, feels the special need of the comforting shelter of the chaste wife. Therefore, at this auspicious moment of holy union of man and woman, the day of the fulfilment of a long cherished hope, the gods are rejoicing. Many years have gone by since the time when, for the sake of our religious convictions, we were driven out of our ancestral home. We knew not where to go when the boat of our lives took to the water. That boat drifting along has now reached the landing-place where the mendicant couples of the New Dispensation take their vow of conjugal chastity. Lord, Thou hast fulfilled the hopes of years. Thou didst once join our hands in wedlock which, of course, served its purpose for worldly ends, but was not of much use for religious purposes. To-

day Thou hast joined four hands together in the house of the spirit. That marriage Thou didst solemnize at Bolly on the bank of the Ganges, this marriage is solemnized here on the bank of the New Dispensation. Thou hast pronounced the benediction,—‘be happy’ ‘be happy’, What a blessed day is this! From this marriage springs both earthly and heavenly good. This marriage is high and holy, solemn and beautiful. No profane thought will be in the mind of either of us; this is a sacred bond. We will not look at each other in any derogatory and spiteful fashion. We will so love each other as no materialistically-minded couple ever can. When we look at each other we will see divinity in its masculine and feminine aspects mirrored in each. Mother, I never thought my hopes will be fulfilled so soon. Ah, what may not be wrought by the power of prayer? Is prayer a trifling thing? Here is an ordinary, insignificant person who, while seeking the purposes of Providence, has been given such a precious boon. This wife of mine—was there any hope of her coming this way? No, none at all! Her ways, how adverse,

how perverse ! When I go one way, she goes another. But, now, can Satan any more stand in the way ? Did not Satan boast, "I will set you two on two separate paths, you will never come together in spirit, there will be thorns and impediments galore on the way? Do not presume that you will sing the praises of the Lord in the company of wife and family ? Satan, get you gone. Could you do anything. Will my twenty years of prayer be like bread cast upon the waters ? Ah ! my prayer is being already fulfilled. Mother, Thou hast demonstrated what the taking of *Hari's* name can do. When will we two, keeping true to the vow of conjugal chastity, reach the abode of peace ? On an auspicious day and hour starts this mystic union of other-worldly yoga, where there are no bodily relationships. Mother, from now on we two are wholly Thine. We want the privilege to sit at Thy feet for ever and ever. Our carpet for worship will remain spread at Thy feet, and our worship and all our domestic duties will be carried out from there. We can no more move about like worldly-minded people; we can no more harbour

animal passions. We can no more sting each other to the quick as angry husband and wife. Will we not be able to be like Yagna-
valkya and Maitreyi of old? Mother, what will we gain by making a great display on the occasion of taking this vow? Let us not go to extremes, lest we stumble again, quarrel with each other, and undermine religion by lapsing again into worldliness. Therefore, I say, let us be on our guard and move with caution. She who becomes my co-partner in religion, may she be inspired by the Holy Spirit! May she be full of the fire of spirituality! Mother, may these two hapless man and woman show the example of conjugal chastity in the New Dispensation! They were hapless previously, but good fortune has come to them now. Many doubted that this will ever come to be true. All now see that these two have indeed become one in their life time, that they occupy the same seat before God, and have become holy by chanting the name of *Hari*. Now that this has happened out goes grief, out goes despair, out goes sorrow. Nobody believed that in this new spiritual marriage the couple will experience a closer

union; but Thou hast shown and proclaimed that it can be so. Now all that remains is for the children to be brought over to this side. If these few are won over, and the whole household becomes Thine, then we may all be together as one family for all eternity. I do not want to speak of the Community here to-day, as I have already referred to it twice. Mother, I beseech Thee, show unto all conclusively that out of the fiery ordeal into which the wife is plunged, a new wife emerges, otherwise it will not carry conviction. Mother, I kiss Thy feet. May the flag of the New Dispensation fly triumphantly everywhere.

(i) "Mother, after the lamentation and bitter weeping of years none knows better than myself what has happened to this poor man. It is of momentous significance. A man and a woman have become one in Thee. There is one sitting beside me who becomes mine own for all time, here and hereafter. I hear conch shells blowing proclaiming that two immortal souls have become one. The wife is no more a woman, she becomes

A.P. "Yugalvrata-grahan", October 29, 1882

my friend. We become friends of each other. Come, then, my children. Take over the key of the household; manage it yourselves. Permit us to take leave of worldly affairs. Let us two go out into the hills, wander along the riverside free. Sons, daughters, daughter-in-law, let them carry on the duties of the household. They have yet much work to do, let them do it. We will bless them that they have permitted us, their aged parents, to dedicate themselves wholly to religion. May they become the staff of our old age! No more the old life for us. We two have but just launched the new boat of our life. Two people are going out in the hot sun. This is not to be taken as a big thing, like the renunciations of Jesus and Chaitanya. Two tired birds have taken to flight, and are trying to find rest on the tree of the New Dispensation. Mother, what more can I say? May all take shelter in the cool shade of the Dispensation! We two individuals have become one person. Keep watch over us as Thy servant and maidservant. See us unharmed, as we tread the path of thit

new and difficult vow. We become the dwellers of *Vaikuntha*, of *Brindaban*. We smear our bodies with the *ashes of asceticism*. We acknowledge the farewells given us to-day. The household does not need us; we know not whether our friends want us. If they had, they would have joined us and become dwellers of *Brindaban*. They have been seduced by the machinations of the world. They paid heed to the words of their wives; and, see, what has befallen them at the end! We could have all gone on the same boat, but it never came about. Lord, why didst Thou send a small boat? Why do they stand on the bank and bid us farewell, they who should have come with us? Instead of saying, 'Come, let us go, why do they say, go ahead? Very well, so be it. If they feel happy in getting rid of us two, let it be so. We will not stay in this country, we will not touch anything belonging to this place, we will go on to another country. I have spoken to them at great length on the vow of conjugal chastity, but nobody listened to it. Mother, give everybody the grace to choose the right. May every one be ready and fully equipped

to go to heaven (*Vaikuntha*). Bless us that we two eschewing all manner of hypocrisy and insincerity, may surrender ourselves heart and soul at Thy feet."

Brother—Sister

God is the Father, all men are brothers, we have from the very first believed in this relationship. How much this relationship needs to be explicit and meaningful, we have given very little thought to it. It is not so easy to call all men brothers as it is to call God Father. Therefore, Keshub has prayed thus.

(i) "O God, the degree of of nearness felt for Thee is not enough, it seems if a greater measure of nearness to Thee is not realised, we will not be able to get nearer to man. We may cultivate communion with God in solitude, we may be absorbed in yoga and meditation, but as regards relationship with the brother, we are at a standstill. If we offer love worth two lacs of rupees to God, we can afford only two pice worth of love for the brother. This terrible judgment has been found to be true in our lives and dealings. It has been proved in our dealings,

(i) A. P." "*Amra manushke Bhalovashiba*,"
May 17, 1882.

how much more difficult it is to love man than to love God. In proportion as man becomes godly in that proportion he may be devoted to truth, religion and morality; but our human relationship has turned out to be miserably poor. There is plenty of meditation on God, but as regards love to man great is our poverty, and low is our estate. Here our gain has been exceedingly little. Every member of this community will say, if a fellow-brother drive me away the Divine Mother does not. When we are ill treated by the brother the Divine Mother draws us to Herself. The house of prayer is our abode of peace. In the deepening of yoga, in the intensification of the fervour of bhakti the soul advances to a higher state,—every one thinks this is easy of attainment. But, O God, advancing greatly towards Thee, does it necessitate retreating so far from the brother? We seek a big deal in our transactions with Thee, but the investment in the case of the brother is very poor. Where is the spirit of truth, of compassion, and of integrity of character? Father, I find that the investors' two transactions do not thrive

equally well. We have to increase the capital of the brother's side. So much was invested herein, but the profit amounted to only two pice and a half. How miserably poor we are in our human relationships? Why have we not been able to love our brothers? O Lord, look with favour on us. Has the Navavidhan disseminated such contrary truths as make God easy of access and man inaccessible? Thou wilt enter into our heart of hearts while man remains remote and unattainable. We may hold God close to ourselves while we may not even serve our brother-man! God, if Thy being near brings man a little nearer, then do Thou draw still nearer, otherwise we cannot possess the treasure man, cannot possess our brother treasure, our sister treasure. Man has not come into the orbit of our spiritual exercises. O Lord, let us hold Thee in closer embrace. Let us possess the world of both mortals and immortals through love and bhakti. Bless us that by our whole-souled spiritual effort, and through the magic of Thy name we may be caught in the spell of Thy love, and extend our love to our brethren!

Why is our relationship with brother man as indissoluble as our relationship with God? Because we are ordained by God to establish the kingdom of love. Our failure on this score will never be pardoned, because whatever is destined by Providence for us we have to fulfill at all costs. The following prayer shows what is God's will for us.

“The heart grieves over the fact that the purpose of my life remains unfulfilled. Have I come into the world to do just what I am doing at present? No, surely not. I feel I have not turned my full attention to that for which I came to the world. I have a purpose in life,—a very lofty one,—it is to build up men and women,—to prepare them for the ideal of the New Dispensation. The wise, the learned, the illustrious yogis, bhaktas and devout worshippers,—all have come. But who are the ones that have not come? Those who loving one another will unite in doing good to the world. Why then O Father, have we come to India if not for this? Thy New

A. P. “*Premrajya sthapan*”. June, 18, 1882

Dispensation is the religion of love in which no enmity can exist, where unforgiveness, quarrels and dissensions will disappear, and all mankind, bound together in ties of love, will sing Thy praises in joy. We will remove all conflicts and discords and establish the bond of love among the seekers of religion. All the diverse warring religionists of the world, the saints and sinners, rich and poor will come together. This has, indeed, not come to pass. If we try hard can we not all of us together build up the happy family? Those who have become well advanced in piety, can they not attain to the status of lovers of mankind? Thou Compassionate One, may we be given to show what a happy family is while we are in the flesh; at least let it be established among a faithful few. Where, O God, is Thy Kingdom of love, Thy abode of joy to enter wherein is to part with selfishness, anger, unforgiveness and unpeace. In which Himalayan height is that place situated? God, take me to that place. O Lord, why is it that that kingdom of love does not grow and spread any more? Instead it shrinks more and more. If man

inspite of a thousand enmities, can kiss the dust of one another's feet then alone will the New Dispensation be established. Otherwise, disgusted with one another, the more we remain mutually estranged, the more will the New Dispensation be shorn of its glory and power. Bless us that, witnessing the fulfilment of the original purpose of the New Dispensation,—namely, the establishment of the kingdom of love we may consider ourselves blessed."

Why should this be so will be made clear from a study of the following prayer of Keshub.

"O Lord, we have heard that charity believeth all things, endureth all things, that charity is the religion of heaven, that it is full of patience and is long-suffering. Do we, O Lord, perform kind deeds in this spirit? Do we, bear one another's burdens, do we trust one another? These two virtues are wanting in us. Thou art carrying the colossal burden of the world, when we observe this

(i) A. P. "*Viswasher dharma*, June 3, 1882.

we understand there is no greater lover of all than the Lord. Such art Thou Thyself, and yet we cannot believe that charity goes on trusting for ever. Let oppression and persecution come, let insults be heaped on us, yet will we keep on trusting, for it is iniquitous not to trust. The scripture says,—Charity believeth all things. Charity judgeth not, it trusts. Judging is heartless, cruel, trusting is compassionate. Lord, Thou believest me. Thou art All-good, I am a great sinner. I am Thy wicked son yet Thou dost trust me. Looking upon me as Thy son, deserving of Thy love, Thou dost treat me though underserving as Thy son. As the object of Thy Compassion, Thou dost believe in me, and kindly feed me. Thou art terribly kind, Thy compassion is an awful thing. The wonder of it is how dost Thou keep Thy trust in me. These twenty years how many sins have I committed, yet putting Thy trust in me Thou hast brought me into the household of the Navavidhan. Lord, I believe that Thou dost out of Thy kindness feed and clothe me, but I cannot understand how Thou dost trust me. I am the lowest of the low. I

have not been able to become like the Son of God. My God, He trusts even him who is a sinner of the worst type, who has committed murder and adultery hundreds of times. This trust is greater than charity; greatness lies more in trusting than in charity. Does not the Bible say,—Charity believeth all things, it trusts all. In all the three worlds only in one person have I found an example of this; and that, Father, is Thyself. Father, he who has been guilty of stealing from Thy household so many times dost Thou trust even such a one? My family, friends and kinsmen none of them believe in me, only my God believes in me. Should I not, therefore, love Thee greatly? Mother, Thou hast put Thy trust in this polluted sinner. Thou hast taken in Thy lap the scavenger's son, while I cannot put my trust in my brethren! If we are spoken sweet words we keep on trusting, but if harsh words are used our trust is destroyed. O God, kindle our hope, for this is a precept of a very high order; and it would be a matter of great regret if we cannot practise it in life. Trust is greater than charity, or trust and charity are one and the

same thing. To trust one another is heaven, and not to do so is irreligiousness, the torment of hell-fire. O Merciful One, tell us, which is to be ? Shall we be able to cultivate trust in our life ? Such a religious spirit will be ours, that however provokingly we are treated, however persecuted, we will still say, we will go on forgiving, trusting. Mere love will not do, we have to go futher, we have to trust. This we have to do. Another new peak higher than *Dhavalagiri* (Everest) has been discovered. The religion of love becomes inferior to the religion of trust ! How extravagant is Thy love for me. Bless us that we may by trusting the vilest of men, trusting all men, loving and serving all men be fulfilled, and be humble ! ”

What is the reason for believing thus ? To see God in men and women by being attuned to the spirit of God. He speaks of this in another prayer:—

“I will worship my God in and through these men and women. Thou, O Mother, dost dwell in these receptacles. In

these Thou dost give a vision of Thy living presence. I cannot disregard them, cannot quarrel with them, cannot sit in judgment upon them. Even if they are thieves, adulterers, murderers, still they are divine. Their animal side does not strike the eye, their divine side meets the eye. The splendour of God shines through them, ripples of divine joy sweep through them. It is not that I do not recognize they are sinners, but in spite of it all, I honour the divinity that is in them. By offering my heart's homage to the divinity in them, I will gain an easy access to heaven. Nobody can win heaven by regarding man as a mere human being. In these fleshly tabernacles is seen the indwelling of God.—

.....Man as mere man cannot be the object of love; no one can do it. You can love man if you see God dwelling in him. Jesus saw divine Fatherhood in man, and having seen he gave his love to that Fatherhood. O God, I do not capitulate to human love, but I love my brother as an integrant of the One Eternal Spirit."

Servant — Disciple

Those who stand in the relation of brothers and sisters to one another for purposes of personal services they become servants, for purposes of learning they become disciples;— this is ordained by God, our Father and Mother. This is shown in the following prayer:—

“Thou Merciful God, Ocean of Peace we have come to Thee as aspirants for salvation through personal service. We are servants, servants of servants and their men are the servants of the devotee and servants. The devotees are Thy servants, we are the servants of all men. In the catalogue of spiritual exercises we have neglected one particular item. We have not cultivated the spirit of personal service. The disciples of Maharshi Isha, the Roman Catholics, have shown in a pre-eminent manner how they keep their vow of personal service. Because Jesus had shown the example of the religion of the servant, of dedication to a life of personal service, therefore his disciples and their successors have propagated his religion

far and wide. Lord, Thou hast given us the task of serving the family, of working for the formation of its character. Ours is the life of the servant. Because those who give money for the maintenance of the missionaries say we will not help if they do not do their duty properly. As there are rules in other offices so we have in ours. But we, practice deception in our work as servants. We do not work, we do not serve. We want salvation through contemplative union with God, we want to wield power, to exercise authority. We do not want to be in the position of the servant. What, shall we work as servants of man! O God, punish us and, by punishing compel us to become servants. Do not put it off any longer, for such a conceited person cannot go to heaven. Let us not imagine that we can enter heaven by fraudulent means while making a show of playing on the *Ektara* and singing hymns to Thee. We have to produce a list of our daily duties as servants. We have to render an account of our servitorship otherwise we will not be eligible to enter heaven. Salvation through personal service is a wonderful thing, a man gets caught very

easily if he is not true to his calling. But in the case of the aspirant through contemplative union a man is not so easily caught. It is easier far to be engaged in communion, in singing or in spiritual exercise in solitude; here the part played by conscience is not much in evidence. We have however to render an account in heaven. Nobody can go to heaven who does not go through heart-breaking labour as a servant. In serving is salvation assured. Blessed is he who serves; blessed is he who is a devoted servant. He who climbs high slips down; he who abases himself he is lifted up. Mother, so ordain that we may take to serving. Let us take the vow of mutual service. When you become a servant blessings from heaven are showered on you in profusion. The servant, it is he who has bought up heaven. God, it is the servant of the world who have reserved for them beautiful mansions in heaven. Without self-subordination there is no place available in heaven. Servants are the crowning point of self-subordination. What great fun for the servant, while serving he humbly hands over a tooth-pick, and just from that his name is

inscribed in heaven. What an irony of fate! It matters not whether I sing or chant for five hours with the accompaniment of the *Ektara*, or whether I celebrate big *utsavs*, or whatever else I do the servants always take precedence in the heaven-ward march, while yogis and bhaktas are left behind. Narrow and low is the door of heaven, if you do not bend your head you cannot go in.

O Loving Mother, many a time have I thought of this, therefore I pray Thee to grant us the vow of servitorship. We are all as humble servants of one another. What has happened to us that we do not find the least time for serving others. O God, let us adopt the sweet calling of servitorship and spend the last days of our life in Brindaban, there is no other way by which we can wipe out the shame that has besmirched our body. We are as big potentates (*Nawabs*) we do not want to bend our heads. We say—we have given up our worldly avocations, why then, should we again take to serving. We may not bend our heads to the foreign masters for the sake of money, but we will bend

our heads before the poor and serve them. We will not take up service there where there is any expectation of money, but why should we not serve there where there is no expectation of money. He who could do service this way, heaven is his. We will serve our poor brother when he is ill. It may be that him whom we serve may be dissatisfied and annoyed with us. We should regard such treatment as reward in ready money. The chastened mind at once exclaims—God be thanked for this. Where there is no reward of sweet words, of responsive sympathy, no expectation of money there go on serving with your last breath. The more you serve the more are abuses heaped on you; and the more are abuses heaped on you the more you go on serving. I tell you such a servant is, verily, a citizen of heaven, and this is true here and now and not only in the pages of the *Bhagavat* (scripture of bhākti). O Father, we have become yogis and bhaktas, only we have not become servants. Mother, if Thou wilt offer us the calling of servants our salvation is assured. And if over and above it we sing on the

Ektara that will be like borax added to gold. It will look like beautiful flowers woven with gold or silver thread on a piece of very black cloth. There is no other way to heaven but through the calling of the servant. Ah! the venerated vedas and vedantas become null and void. The waiters receive the crown of diamond while we the yogis and bhaktas of the New Dispensation will be consigned to the outer darkness. How the order is reversed! Everything will be turned upside down, the first will become last and the last first, Lord smash to picees our pious pride so that by serving others we may be entitled to a place in heaven”.

What greatness, what nobleness lie in becoming a servant and a disciple finds expression in the following prayer:—

“O Merciful God, we have become preceptors, tell us when will we become disciples. We have become fathers when will we become children?. We have imparted instructions a great deal, when will we receive instructions?. Man has two sides in his nature”. One side has developed greatly; if Thou gracious

ly dost grant us the development of the other side then our development will be complete. In this place of learning,—the New Dispensation which you have instituted we have taught religion to others, have given instruction as preceptors, and have received ministrations as masters. Now we ask ourselves,—when will we become disciples?. People think it is very difficult to be preachers and preceptors. What greater place of eminence can there be for a man than to be a preacher and to be listened to by thousands and thousands of people. Through Thy grace we have secured this place. God, thousands minister unto us, give us money, and clothes. To whose lot do such things happen?. We have found shelter at Thy feet, we do not have to seek the favour of any person,—who is so fortunate as we are?. The higher side of our nature has had its full play, when will the other side come to be developed?. Everyone is ministering unto us why should we not do a little likewise, we have been preaching to others, why should we not have others preach to us, others have been giving of their own to us, why should we also not give to others?. O

God, all speak of us as masters; the honour and the status that is given to us it seems as if the world cannot offer any more. But we have not come to the world to play the part of masters, we have come to the world to become disciples, to become the liege man's liege man, the servant's servant. That which used to be the rule in the older dispensations, we find its opposite enjoined on us to-day. To become the *guru* used to be the highest ambition in former times; one man became the *guru*, and hundreds and thousands would fall at his feet, it is not so to-day. Now every one is master, king supreme. Things have come to such a pass that the tendency to look up has suffered a decline. The bhakti that looks up to a higher person is not met with any more. We do not acknowledge that there are any masters above us. One half of our nature is wallowing in hell, lift us up. O Lord, why should we not revere those of our brothers who are deserving of respect?. God, Thy Christ also received great honour, at the same time in a very submissive spirit he served others, though a king he humbled himself to become one of the people, though

a master he took up the calling of a servant. In spite of his exalted position he found it easy to wash the feet of his disciples. We ought to learn from his example. We are getting up higher and higher; those who were below us are emulating our example. Lord, why should we not regard ourselves as belonging to the line of servants? We will receive instructions from others, we will learn of them, we will minister unto them. One side of our nature is being suppressed, our spirit of self-subordination and bhakti is on the wane, but our tenderness for those below us has increased. Our mind has reached greater heights, it does not want to be pliant to any one. Those who were above us we now look upon them as equals. O Father, all the brethren of the New Dispensation are trying to acquire the status of the *guru*. they want to become preceptors, ministers. How have they fallen a prey to this disease? Have mercy on us, just as one side of our nature has gone up, so let the other side come down. The school for preparing preceptors has been established, do Thou open the school for preparing disciples. May we, the few brothers, learn to become

subjects, servants, disciples. There are plenty of gurus, we do not want any more of them. Grant this prayer that we may fulfil our destiny by taking the vow of the (1) disciple and the servant."

It is in this that there is a marked difference between Keshub and his friend. From the day that he was ordained as a Minister of the Brahmo Samaj by Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, he was accepted and honoured as a minister by all. The sermons that he delivered came to be known as "The Minister's Sermons" *Acharyer Upadesh* by the public at large. Then all on a sudden a great change came over Keshub. With his own hand he cancelled the title *Acharyer Upadesh* and put in its place "The Servant's Humble Offerings" (*Sevaker Nivedana*). This is not mere sentimentalism, his whole life bears witness to it. He could not find a single individual to whom he could entrust his work of ministering to the community, and retire from active service. This work was not one of an ordinary kind. That man who

A. P. "*Shishyavrata bhrityavrata*", Oct. 4, 1881.

could unreservedly spend his life-blood for the well-being of the community only he is chosen of God and fit to take up this work. We bear witness to the fact how, as the ministrant (*Sevak*), he uncomplainingly endured obloquy, hatred, insults and persecutions, and, in return, showered his everlasting blessings on all. We who were Keshub's associates can bear witness to the agony of his soul during sleepless nights, whenever he found that the community, instead of moulding itself after his ideal, was being enslaved by jealousy and vindictiveness. Therefore, we will loudly proclaim before the world the truth that he was a true servant of the community, and spilt his life-blood in its service. Since none but he has offered his service in this spirit, and since there are many among us who wanted and still want to work not as servants but as preceptors we have to confess with shame our unfitness for the task. As regards his spirit of discipleship he has spoken of it fully in the chapter on "Discipleship" in his Autobiography, the *Jeevan Veda*.

Humility : Bhakti

He who has not understood the spiritual excellence of the virtue of humility, there is no likelihood of his ever being suffused with the passion of bhakti. Devotees have spoken of bhakti as being rooted in humility, or as springing out of humility. He who has not experienced the state of utter self-abasement, how will he regard himself as humbler than the lowly grass; and not till he does so, is it likely that he will realize the grandeur and majesty of the Eternal and Infinite Spirit? Bhakti always tends to reach upward; it grows greater every day by making Him. Who is in every respect greater than itself, its shelter and sustenance. Therefore, the proud, the conceited and self-inflated persons can never attain bhakti, they always lack bhakti. Love of God, love towards His people is never possible without humility, therefore we can well understand how needful is it for every one to acquire bhakti. The following prayer shows how to acquire humility :—

“O Heavenly Father, Saviour of
the needy and afflicted, those who became

very great, they had the spirit of humility in a pre-eminent degree. The proud has never become devotees of the highest order, founders of religion, or renowned as heaven-sent apostles by the people. Such a great *rishi*, Jesus, he himself said,—I am exceedingly poor in spirit. When we think of all this we lose heart for we are very proud. No tears of penitence flow from our eyes for our sins. We have been telling the world that we are deeply religious, that we serve humanity in so many ways. Why has this vaingloriousness come amongst us? The saints have left the example of meekness in the world. Our minds have become overheated by dwelling on the fact that we are highly educated, that we have gone through manifold religious practices and that we have received inspiration times without number. Not till the fire of pride is extinguished is there any hope of salvation. Why do we not humble ourselves to the dust and remain there? Why do we not behave as servants before all? We do not demean ourselves before our fellow humans, but we humble ourselves before God for thereby we exalt ourselves. Our proud arrogant head

would not bend before man. Pride of educational accomplishments, of religious culture and devout love of God have filled our minds. Extinguish the fires of all kinds of pride by pouring on them the waters of humility. Those in whose minds the fires of sin and impiety still keep burning why they should indulge in pride? Let not the Satan of pride vitiate our sin-bedimmed vision. As for our deeds of piety how few are they? Are our hands clean? Do not unlove rankle in our hearts? Do not evil thoughts and unbelief still haunt us? Has our bhakti reached the state of inebriation? Are our minds free from distraction during meditation (*dhyana*)? What is there to boast of then? By being proud we have greatly sinned against Thee, O Father. There is nothing of which we can be proud. We still lack faith. Do we love Thee with an undivided heart? We have not yet been able to establish Thee in the family circle, we have not yet been bound by ties of the spirit with the members. O Lord, we have accomplished nothing on this earth. How few have we benefited? Nothing of Thy love and purity have we made our own. The time

has not yet come when we will get together to rejoice over the vision of Thy loving countenance. Make us humble like the lowly grass—O God, humble us to the dust. Him whom Thou dost humble him Thou dost lift up to Thy bosom, him Thou dost exalt. Therefore, bless that with the help of Him who crushes to atoms all kinds of pride, we become meek and lowly and in serving Thee and our brothers and sisters we may win peace and purity in abundance.”

The beauty of humility is brought out, in this prayer:—

“Thou bestower of happiness, there is a deep purpose in the fact that Thou hast made us poor. Thy mysterious saving dispensation is confirmed by this fact. It is not the good fortune of all to be humble; he alone can have humility whom Thou dost make humble. He whose humility is gifted by Thee he is blessed, fortunate. I call him fortunate whom Thou dost divest of all riches making him destitute and admitting him into the class

A. P. “Dinaita”, Oct. 14, 1881.

of beggars. It is indeed very hard to be a long-suffering person. Many count themselves happy, but it does not fall to the lot of all to become one of the long-suffering kind; it happens only to the chosen few. Great is the glory of humility. The soil of suffering,—what an abundance of fruit does it bring forth! The field which is watered with tears bears fruit beyond all reckoning. Those who have become missionaries, Thou first madest them poor and humble and then Thou didst instal them on exalted seats in the religious world. Thou hast taught us, poor that we are, to look to one another for succour; the poor man's ways of living, his food and clothing, his looks, his worship and devotions,—all are good, heart satisfying. Even the first alphabet of the sacred book of humility is exceedingly wonderful. Sitting under the shade of a tree, a few brothers fired with devotional fervour are singing Thy name and calling Hari, Hari, is it not a vision of heaven on earth? O God, Thou hast made this *Managal-bari* neighbour, a meeting place of the poor; if we try to make it a place for well to do, prosperous people, we will suffer spiritual

death. O Thou friend of the poor, Thou dost Thyself limn with brush the soft lines in the glowing faces of these poor people. It is a very great thing to be poor.

When the five Pandavas lived in the midst of great affluence, made a display of their pomp and power, solemnized the *Rajasuya yagna*, they did not shine so well. But when they retired into the forest with their family, and lived in the midst of great hardship and misery, like the moon in the midst of the clouds, the beauty of that scene is ravishing. The way they embraced poverty in a spirit of humility, the way that sorrowing Draupadi called upon Sri Krishna in her distress, the recalling of these incidents melts one's heart. And the beauty of Yudhisthir in distress, how it makes him shine in all his glory. If Rama had all along occupied his throne, if Sita had all along been seated on his left what would have been the verdict of history? People would have said,—What a king! And that would have been the end of it. But when they went into exile how did they look and comport themselves? How

loving and sweet was Sita's looks. O God, those families who are heavy laden, they are the happy ones in the world. We are very stupid, therefore, we do not understand why hast Thou made us one of the long-suffering kind. We have no faith therefore we fail to understand the deep spiritual meaning of such things. It is in the faces of the poor in spirit that heaven is mirrored. In times of sorrow the spirit becomes chastened, sorrow softens the spirit, and in suffering we passionately hug to our bosom the feet of the Lord. It is a great pity that the men of the world heartily detest sorrow and suffering. Who has the good fortune to be lovingly told by Thee, "give up your five rupees worth of service, and become a missionary"? Nowhere else is to be found such a happy-though-poor,-poor-but-happy-family. O my mind do but look with the eye of faith and you will find heaven hidden in this poor neighbourhood. Thou hast made our family, our wife and children poor. Thou sayest, "I can provide for you, but I will not. I will purify these people by making them pass through sorrow and suffering. I will show the land of Bengal how

sorrow and suffering purify. After ages this band of apostles, taking the vow of poverty, have stood up to show forth the spiritual power of religion. O Divine Mother, may no evil desire tempt them to be angry or greedy, give them the right spirit so that their vow of poverty may purify and bless them."

The following prayer speaks of the life-long vow of poverty to be espoused by the apostles:—

"O Merciful God, the apostle's vow of humility is a token of Thy love for them. Because he whom Thou dost afflict for a time on him dost Thou put Thy mark of the chosen one for making him known to the world. Father, to cool the fever of unholy desire of the body Thou hast brought forth this precious treasure,—humility. Humility extinguishes the fires of sin. The humility of the humble puts a curb to pride, fills the spirit with love and ravishes the heart. This is why humility has to turn up again and again, in the disciplines of the inner life; This is why the vessel of life returns to the landing place of humility again and again. God,

if we lie at Thy feet as a suppliant we can gather much peace and happiness. Father, make us realise. that the practice of detachment, of taking up the cross of life is the only way to happiness. Our worldly life, our selfishness, pride, our misconceptions and spirit of separatism have kept us alienated from one another. Thou drawest us towards one another, whereas we are self-centered prompted by self-seeking. I tried hard so many times to build up a brotherhood, but, the world lured us away. Father, we could not carry out the vow of poverty, it is a very difficult vow. We are a handful few, members of one body, and we are one in spirit. It is not for us to look for high position, luxury and a life of ease. For us, for the missionaries of the New Dispensation Thou hast ordained the simplest food. Why do we, again and again, go out in quest of worldly ease and affluence? Can we say with hands on our heart that we have become pure? By way of penance let us again take the vow of poverty. Lord, set them apart from other men and feed them with plain food. We eat and live like beasts, not like righteous men.

The saints used to take their food sitting at Thy feet, mind full of Thee chanting Thy name, reading the scriptures, and relishing Thy name and beauty so that our whole being may be bathed in the essence of immortality. We do not eat in this way, we do not work with Thy name on our lips. Let this cottage life be our religion, our food and raiment, and all our actions like those of the men of faith. Make this little band a spiritual body. Bind it together into a compact body with the laws of health, hygiene and morality regulating their life. Let poverty and self-subordination characterize our cottage life. Drive away the fever of self-inflation. Bless us that we may purify our body and mind by being loyal to the vow of poverty.

Striving after Perfection

The subject we have have dealt with so far demand an intensive spiritual culture. Death has sealed Keshub's lips, but his spirit will never cease to speak. Those for whom Keshub had given his life while in the flesh, he is now holding before them, for their spiritual welfare, pictures of the as-yet-unrealised things of the spirit in their lives. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit these presentations come in the form of unceasing prayers. Convinced of this spiritual ministrations we keep the as-yet-unachieved ever before us, striving for its translation in life. God has taken up in his own hand the work of looking into and judging how far we have been successful in this matter. His command unto us is,— “up to the end of your life you strive for the as-yet unattained. Leave its fulfilment in My hands. Having seen how much you have laboured I will dispense the fruits thereof accordingly.” This command we take for granted with bowed head, for we know, our responsibility in this matter is very great. Keshub's prayer thus speaks of it:-

“O Thou refuge of the suppliant,

the God of devotees, for an individual to become Thy devotee is an easy thing, but for a whole family to become Thy devotee is difficult, and for all together to become Thy devotees is still more difficult. A certain individual getting to know Thee and have an understanding of Thee somehow or other; falls in love with Thee. And the result? He leaves his family and household affairs in a mess. Self-centred, he spends his time chanting Thy name. How can such a person command our reverence? Thou wilt not permit the man of little faith to enter heaven. Thou, O God, full of the joy of life abounding, Thou dost want that the family in a body should be Thine, that in every work Thy name be glorified, that in every object Thou art seen to dwell, and that every day and all through the year we may cultivate Thy presence,—when this is done Thy desire will be fulfilled. Art Thou pleased when we do not bathe and eat in the proper spirit with the chanting of Thy name? Thou, certainly, art not. Thou dost rejoice when we bathe, eat and lie down holding communion with Thee. If we bring only one before Thee, if we bring two before Thee

leaving two others behind, if I bring my wife
 and leave the daughter behind, Thou dost
 turn away Thy face in displeasure saying,—‘I
 will not accept.’ If I bring only my family
 Thou dost ask,—‘where is the community?’
 This kind of partial exclusive devotion has
 wrought havoc in our inner life. O Lord,
 when will we attain to a devotion that is
 perfect? We have inscribed Thy name only
 on the walls of the sanctuary, while the other
 walls of the house are bare. Nothing serves
 to satisfy Thee. All except two of the rooms
 we have decorated with powdered rice paste,
 patterns of the feet of Lakshmi. And Thou
 dost say I will not enter the house, in which
 Lakshmi has no place in all the rooms. Not
 till we give cent per cent love wilt Thou be
 satisfied. My God is an importunate beggar.
 He will not quit asking if He is not given
 our all. If we offer fifteen annas and a half
 Thou wilt wrestle with us for the remaining
 two pice. We have to offer our all to Thee.
 Especially I have to offer my all before any-
 body else brings his offering. For Thou hast
 given me such a great deal that if I give a
 little others will give much less than me. O

Father, may discord not come into this house any more. The day that the temptation of self-seeking enters this house, that day Satan will become the ruler, and God will leave by the back door. Lord, since we have embraced Thy religion of the New Dispensation we will strive for the standard of perfection. Bless us that we may give our money, our all to Thee and be happy!" (i)

In this spiritual striving self-deception is impossible. What is this striving, this prayer, and what are the signs of its fulfilment will be found in the following prayer :—

"Thou Lord of Compassion, the God of devotees, we do not want to be pure externally, we want to see the heart purified. We want that there will not be a single sin in our heart of hearts. But we are blind to our evil motives and do not recognise our sins. Thou art the Indweller, if Thou dost not show us our sin man can never see it. How will man's life improve if evil thoughts and the hidden sins of the heart do not leave him

A. P.—"*Purna Sadhan*," July 19, 1883.

Those who commit sins even if friends come to speak of them they are annoyed, Father, if Thou wouldst wash us clean we may be reformed. As for our own people they imagine they have become good. 'I have become quite a good saint,' so saying they quit striving and settle down. How, then, will they improve? If Thou wouldst hasten to convince them that they are still the slaves of many big sins, then we may be warned in time. As the hairs on our head so are the number of our sins. Unfaith, pride, adultery,—all these swarm like maggots within us. Like unto the sands on the sea shore are our countless sins. Many are the stains of sin recorded in Thy book which seated on Thy judgement seat Thou art inscribing. He who thinks he does not sin he is a hypocrite, a depraved detestable person who does not believe in the Living God. Do Thou but once wash them clean with the waters of holiness, and usher in the paradise of love in the heart. Only the yogis show how even their inner parts (entrails) are washed clean with the Ganges water of holiness, so that no black spots remain. Lord whom Thou dost clean in this

way they are the truly pure. But those who think are eminently pure they are conceited. Those whom Thou dost purify no sin can be found even in the marrow of their bones. O Deliverer, if Thou wouldst give us salvation make us clean like these, so that the truly pure in heart would bear witness that we are clean through and through. Lord, so ordain that whichever way we turn we will see the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of holiness,—all spotlessly white. What we see is all good, what we think is all good, who do experience thus? Those who have the ocean of holiness in their hearts. To the gods all are white, white clean through. When we are like them the world will speak of us that even our inward parts are white, white like the edifice of Agra marble. Bless us that we may be freed from boastfulness and be holy and happy.” (i)

Many among us spoke of themselves as being holy, saintly and one with the saints. But why did not the world give heed to these words, rather did it quit our com

A. P.—“*Harir Suddhata*,” June 25, 1883

pany calling us hypocrites. Keshub called himself as guilty of all kinds of sin,—and he even expressed sorrow at his not getting the respect of his associates because of this. But the world said, this man is mad, otherwise why does he call himself a sinner when we do not find any sin in him? Whether the world sees the meaning of his deep saying or not, it is true that it has acknowledged the fact of his not harbouring any sin in his heart. But exactly opposite is the case with us. The world did not believe in us. God himself does not believe in us. Keshub always saw himself living in the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the more he looked at His face the more he felt himself to be a sinner. He who constantly realised the holiness of the Incorruptible God, and the sinfulness of man, how can the world find sin in such a man.

What is this that we call the world? The place for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, how dare we mislead it by verbal jugglery. This is not like the old dispensations, this is the New Dispensation,—the living dispensation where the Holy Spirit has

marshalled hosts of witnesses all round. How will you and I get away by trickery, why will the world be misled by such talks as—‘I am an apostle commissioned by God? I am one with Keshub? Keshub himself in a letter written to one of the apostles (*Upadhyaya*) has told us of his relationship with associates thus:—

Himalaya (Simla)

July 26, 1883

“Hearty blessings;

Who will offer himself to be pure in thought and deed by the Anniversary *Utsav*—day, the 11th of Magh; Who will offer himself to live and move and have his being in God by ruling out anger, greed, envy, unlove before the coming anniversary celebrations. This time you will have to go through this test. Let us see who come out successful. What is the need of a false show of piety? What will it avail to make pompous exhibition of devotional fervour and affectionateness? He who does not forgive, he who indulges in anger, can he be called one of my own? The group which has no love and trust among its members how can I call that group as mine own? O God, I want men

whole and genuine, give me such. O ye, do not go against me any more. Cool the burning pain in my heart by pouring the water of a holy example over it. Do this good turn to me.

Your wellwisher
Sri K”.

Will these pleadings of Keshub be of no effect. Will not his standard of pure life be established among us? What will it avail us to boast that we are his men if he himself does not acknowledge us as such. God wants, the world wants, Keshub wants the practice of perfection.

The Ideal of The New Dispensation

Keshub, our Minister, came to give to the world the ideal of the New Dispensation. *That ideal he has left behind him in the form of prayers.* The believers of the New Dispensation are called upon to embody it in their lives. This finds utterance in the following prayer:—

“Thou Refuge of the lowly, the King of the New Dispensation, if I am called upon to give an account of myself I will not be able to say,—all this is my work. I will declare now, and in the future, as well as after I am gone that it has all been the work of these others, and that I have had no part in it. They will be able to say that as independent free agents they have gone on their own way, took to the culture of religion by themselves. In one or two matters they have consulted me, but they have done everything by themselves. And that is why there is so much disagreement, so much differences of opinion. On the day of judgement they will all attest to this in unqualified

terms. On that day we will not be allowed to raise contentious issues, but should abide by the decisions considered as just.

I again avow, I have had very little to do in the developments going on. As a legitimate child takes after the parents' nature, culture and character not so well the illegitimate child. It is because one rule, one ideal is not adopted that dissimilarities and dissensions arise. Many conflicting tastes and tendencies coming together have brought on this affair, this achievement. Ten artisans have worked towards the fashioning of this New Dispensation. Too much bhakti, too little bhakti, too much knowledge, too little knowledge, too much worship, too little worship, regular worship, irregular worship, clear God-vision, confused God-vision, God-vision borrowed from the lips of others,—all these strung together have come to mean what is known as the New Dispensation. A multitude of builders are restlessly busy each working after the pattern that is in his own mind. What is this that is being built? A creature queer and fantastic in appearance! O God

of Mercy, what has it come to? I cannot make myself accept this handiwork as my own. If I could have bequeathed to the world the seamless perfect ideal I would have been considerably happy. On the contrary I draw a picture; and in comes some one and says this portion should be blacker and daubed it with tar; another came and said this portion should not be painted thus and altered it and said—this is our Navavidhan! Let them prate of ‘our Navavidhan,’ and having painted their picture of the Navavidhan, append their signature to it but I will never as long as my life lasts put my name on it. Mother, let them each submit a pattern and declare—done under God’s directions. But the original pattern was mine, why did they mix up their colours with mine, why did they tamper with my ideal? Does it mean, then, that this poor man’s ideal will pass away from the world? For whatever happens the original source should be kept intact. I have not come into the world to lose myself in a multiplicity of activities forgetful of my destiny; I have not come to do a little darning or put in patches on a piece of old cloth. I have come to

weave a whole new garment. Why then five others interfere with my work and make a hotch potch of five kinds of opinions and beliefs? O God, bring in the New Dispensation—the adorable infant of rightful parentage, born of the Holy Spirit,—an undivided spiritual whole, Thy truth will be vindicated, and the world will know what a real dispensation is. Bless us that we do not accept a religion of mixed vintage, but accept Thy pure and unalloyed religion of the New Dispensation, and be holy and happy.”

Whose heart is not deeply grieved to read such a prayer? But Keshub has himself admitted that he himself is responsible for this tribulation. Himself initiated in the cult of independence, he wished to see his friends also initiated with the same spirit of independence, and always encouraged them to cultivate it. It was intolerable to him if anybody, unless prompted by the spirit of God, subordinated himself to him. He did not seek honour or obsequiousness. That anybody prostrating himself before him would barter

away his independence, far from harbouring any desire of this kind he would look upon it with contempt. He would look upon him as a fraud who would subordinate himself to him unless it came as a result of his subordination to God. And seeing in clear spiritual vision the future of such a person he would unhesitatingly observe that he would not continue to be a member but would inevitably quit the community. A study of the chapter on "Independence" in his autobiography the *Jeevan Veda*, would show what was the predominant passion of his life. Here is an extract from the first portion of the chapter on Independence :—

"When the Holy Spirit initiated me into the mysteries of religion, the master-word, "Independence," was embodied in the initiation charge. "My dear child," said He, "never be dependent on any one—this is my supreme exhortation to thee." From the beginning up to the present moment I have been following this injunction to the best of my ability in thought, word and deed. Dependence acts as a poison in this world of ours; it is

the cause of untold miseries of hell upon earth. I do not know why, from the very beginning, I had such an intense aversion for dependence. Men strive to drive away lust and anger, and to master other evil passions; they eagerly launch out against these evils, but none goes crazy over such a declaration of Independence as,—“I will never be dependent.” Providence had certainly some mysterious purpose in view; therefore, did He instil this holy passion of independence at the root of my life. What a bitter hatred of dependence did He create in me ! I did not speculate on the evil consequences of dependence; the very idea of dependence was sin to me. I looked upon dependence as sin, as a source of evil, as enmity against God. Such was the conclusion I came to without going into the question of its after effects; for one must implicitly believe in the efficacy of the God-given word the moment he receives it.

Therefore, to this day I never could bend my head to any one. I had to suffer a great deal on this account, but never once have I forsaken the God-given charge

entrusted to me me. To this independence, immovable as a rock, have I clung with both hands; but I must confess it is not an easy thing to hold on this vow of independence. There is, indeed, a deep meaning hidden in this divine injunction,—“Never suffer thyself to be dependent.” Because the New Dispensation would have to come, all sorts of errors and false beliefs would have to be discarded, and the sovereignty of truth established anew in an independent spirit therefore, for all these was the spirit of independence present in me from the very beginning.

Thus, it was independence which became the fundamental principle; the first and foremost word—the word fraught with creative power. And what else can be the outcome of such a spirit than the avowal, “Never will I suffer myself to be dependent.” Out of this spirit have sprung to life many momentous movements. I resolved that I would never allow my body and mind to be fettered by the chains of dependence; never enslave myself to any particular individual;

never fall at the feet of any man; never sell myself to my elders or superiors; never slavishly worship any particular book; never identify myself with a particular sect and continually sing its praises day and night. As on one hand I resolved not to do all this, so on the other I resolved never to be a slave to self-will and pride, never reject any vow which should be taken from the hand of God.

The more the spirit of independence grew in me, the more I perceived how idolatry, caste and other evils were running rampant in the land. And immediately, preparations were set on foot to cut asunder their oppressive shackles. Centuries in succession had suffered the country to remain a slave to these evils, and I stood up, sword in hand, to cut them down. The moment I saw errors and false beliefs keeping my fathers and kinsmen in bondage, tyrannizing the neighbourhood, I unsheathed my weapon to destroy them. I never could tolerate slavery of any kind, nor can now. If I found anybody enslaved by his desires and passions, I felt it to be wrong, and could

never rest quiet. My weapons always flashed to cut down all kinds of slavishness. I did not realize the magnitude of the evil wrought by dependence after going through a process of reflection, neither was it after deliberation that I took up weapons against it. But long afterwards I recognised the wonderful power exercised by this mighty word, this God given master-word. Many were the false notions current in the world which turned my brothers and sisters into bondsmen and bondswomen. To enable me to take up my stand against all these, the training that God gave me was such that the very sight of dependence stirred me up. When I found anyone a slave to anger, my wrath was kindled against anger itself. I could not suffer any one to become slavishly attached even to father or son. Whenever I saw any one a slave to riches or fame or to any particular sect, my blood would boil.

God endowed man with independence, but he sold his birthright in the market of the world, and being overpowered by its sins and iniquities is now wailing piteously.

Men of a certain type and temperament fall at the feet of different kinds of men and become their bondslaves. Such a hankering after servitude that they continue in bondage for years and years. Servitude to certain women, in particular, is called lewdness; to men, in general, slavery; and a slave to riches is called avaricious. But all these are so many kinds of sin; to be a slave is sin. When inordinate attachment to the things of the world becomes the ruling passion of life, the result is disastrous. To whatsoever home or hamlet I go I hear anger saying,—“See how many bondsmen and bondswomen I have.” I hear greed saying,—“Look, how many servants I have; even how many mighty potentates am I victimizing.” This slave-mentality that has entered into all is hell fire and has been consuming all in a living death. My God! they know not that independence is salvation and dependence hell. We must unfurl the victory-flag of independence and reduce to dust the strongholds of servitude. We will not succumb to any form of sectarianism. Some advise, “Obey your preceptor.” My heart answers,—“I fear to do so.” “Obey

your father and mother," "I fear to do so" comes the reply. "Follow the counsels of those who are your friends, those with whom you are united in a common faith." My son answers,—“I am sore afraid.” “Gladly submit to those who are specially devoted to you and help you in your religious and philanthropic activities.” My spirit answers,—“I dread dependence.” I would not be bound by an exclusive attachment to any friend. Even the best of my friends have noticed that I do, indeed, love them, but am not enslaved by my affections. So my friends say, “We cannot say this man loves us overmuch, for he does not do what we tell him to do but he sets up an Inner Court of his own judgment.” My friend asks me to do a certain thing, but I do it not. I would not do even a good deed on the good advice of another, but I will do it at the bidding of God. What I do not at the insistence of another, I do with alacrity when God commands. Not till I hear the voice of God will I take up any work. Such a resolution may lead others into troubles; but I have been fortunate in as

much as instead of doing harm it has done me great good. As I have hurt the feelings of my friends by not being subservient to them, so I have not been subservient to my wife either, neither have I been bound by any inordinate attachment to my children, or to my country, nor shall ever be. None will be able to prove that I have ever subjected myself to any person, living or dead, nor cherish an undue attachment to any.

Independence has always been dear and precious to me, but I have never cared for an Independence divorced from the love of God. I did not buy that brand of liberty begotton of proud self-will, that is sold in the market of the world. I did not seek independence as a means of exalting myself, or of securing a higher place in society. Such freedom is really the libertinism of hell, I do not call it independence. I have loved but have not become entangled in my affections. This is true love. I have loved you but have not subjected myself to you. If I had appealed to people in some time-serving fashion my following would have now numbered

hundreds and thousands. If I had sought to tempt people by the glamour of an inordinate attachment, and enlist them in a sodality of slaves, my church would have been full to overflowing. But I made independence the captain of my band. Therefore, I call those who are with me my friends; I do not call myself their master. Independence will triumph. I say again and again, 'Truth shall triumph.' Independence will sound the rallying call; if people come in response to it, let them come. But I will never set myself up as a master, nor take to the profession of a tutelary priest. Dependence I heartily abhor. Shall I not abhor in others, what I abhor in myself? I cannot bear to see even the least in my fold a dependant. I cannot suffer any person to be dependent on another. That anybody should be dependent on me is equally insufferable. What answer shall I give to my father if I allow any man to subject himself to me? Shall I dump my own views on the shoulders of another? Shall I govern others according to my own sweet will? Shall I try to bring people to my fold and keep them in subjection by the alluring phantom of false

attachment? Then certainly hell will open its jaws to devour me and heaven will kick me out. If I fail to build up a community, if not even a single soul remain with me, I will never make another man my slave since I myself have never been one.

Do any one of you know of my ever being enslaved by another? Why should I let you slavishly follow anybody when I myself have never done it? Who so great a sinner and hypocrite as he who not suffering himself to be a slave, seeks to enslave others, or laughs at those living in servitude. A master I am not, nor have I tried to bring others under my rule. I have always imparted to others what I have learned, that is to say, I am a learner, and I am ever ready to learn. If there be fifty men in my fold, they are of fifty different types. Truth is my witness, the sun and the moon are my witnesses, there is no room for dependence in my church. If there be a hundred men present here in this congregation, each is his own master or cheif,—independent of one another. Everyone will have to admit it here and now;

everyone will have to acknowledge it when I am gone. No one in this community breathes the air of dependence; every one lives and moves in independence. I never wish to grind any one as in a mill; I wish to see everyone independent. I do not want you to call any one your master or ruler, God alone do I know to be our Teacher and Ruler. If anyone with slave-mentality has sneaked in here, like a fraud, I will have that hypocrite turned out without fail."

It is superfluous to say that the ideal which he bequeathed to the world could never be embodied in life if one were not initiated in the cult of Independence.

Why is it that the New Dispensation cannot be realised in the believer's life without independence will be evident from his utter dependence on Prayer. He has no other refuge or resources save prayer. He cannot move a single step in the path of life without prayer. Direct contact with God is, therefore of supreme importance. Here independence is not license, waywardness. That no

barrier may come between God and man, prayer is the sole means—The first chapter of the Jeevan Veda.—Prayer is reproduced here:—

The first word of the gospel of my life is Prayer. When no one had come to my help, when I had not entered any religious community as a member, when I had not adopted any form of faith as my own by studying critically the various religions, when I had not taken my admission into the order of saints or novitiates, at that dawn of my religious life, there surged up in my heart an impulse, a voice crying—‘pray, pray.’ I did not know then what religion was; no one had shown me the way to any religious association, or told me who could be a spiritual preceptor (*guru*), nor had any one come forward to accompany me in the dangers and perils of the way of life. At that crisis of my life, like the first rays of the rising sun, the words,—‘pray, pray, there is no other way but prayer’ kept repeating within me. I did not fully understand why and for what I should pray; nor had I time

to argue the point in my own mind. There was no one whom I could ask why I prayed; nor did I enquire of any one as to who enjoined on me to pray. No suspicion arose in my mind that I might be mistaken. Pray, I did. At the time of laying the foundation who gives any thought to the beautifying of the mansion or to the colouring of the portico? For, it is the time to give oneself wholly to the work of laying the foundation.

“Pray, thou shalt be saved, thy character shall improve, thou shalt receive whatsoever thou lackest, these are the words which used to reverberate from all sides,—from the east to the west, from the north to the south of my life. I became a votary of this one idea, this one business became my sole occupation. Prayer is man’s spiritual preceptor, the never-failing helper of the helpless. This preceptor alone I came to know; this preceptor alone was I intimate with; I knew no one else. I had no friend in religion. I would lift up mine eyes to the skies but heard nought of any divine dispensation, nor did I comprehend any religious doctrine. I

never gave any thought as to whether I should go to the church, or the mosque, or the temple, or join the Buddhist Order. From the very first I betook myself to prayer, to that supplication before God, which is superior to the *Veda* and the *Vedanta*, to the *Quran* and the *Purana*.

I am a man of faith. I put my intuitions of faith to the test of reason, and rise to greater heights of faith. Once I put my faith in a thing I am not shaken again. I scrutinize and by way of testing my observation I ask myself—"Is it all right?" and the answer comes, "Yes, go ahead", and I proceed. I commenced the practice of prayer by writing it out, one in the morning, and one at night. Gradually I passed on from dawn to morning, and thence to the light of the advancing day. The four quarters which were immersed in darkness cleared up. Houses, roads and landings all became visible. By continuing in the practice of prayer I began to acquire strength—the strength as that of a lion,—illimitable and irresistible. Lo! I had no longer the old body, no more the old

spirit. What power now in my words, what power in my resolves! No sooner said than done, no sooner resolved than fulfilled! I shook my fists at sin and prayed. Doubt, unbelief, sin and temptation,—to all these I would present a grim, determined front. Every evil fled from me when I threatened to pray. Thus, as with child-like importunity I sat, a suppliant, at the feet of the Deity I would always get something from Him. Did I need any thing? Who was to give? Did I want to go somewhere? Who was to show the way? Who was to drive my sins away? In all things prayer was my helper. My one and only treasure at that time was prayer; on it alone I depended. I looked up to prayer to bring me happiness. For help of any kind I appealed to prayer. As people say of an only child, "He is my all, my only sapphire," (*nilmani*), so was prayer my only wealth.

Brethren, I had only this supreme helper, prayer. What books should be read? What subject should be discussed? To whom should I go? I knew not at all. If Providence had not reduced me to such straits I fear, I

could not have acquired such a faith in prayer. If any one censured me I would close my eyes and say,—“Prayer, where art thou? Come to me in this hour of trial.” I did not know my mother tongue so well as to be able to pray in proper form. But I could not check the flow of thoughts and feelings that came in a rush. Sitting by the window I would say a word or two with my eyes open. Even this brought me abundant joy. Priceless treasure received in a moment. But the question was, having received the treasure, to whom to offer it? To whom to pass it on? Thus passed my time in those days. That is the reason why I love prayer so much. Brethren, ye are my friends, but prayer is a far greater friend to me, though invisible, him I know to be my friend indeed. Perhaps, more than any of you here I am in greater debt to prayer, for there was a time when I had no other friend but prayer.

I knew for certain that to pray is inevitably to hear something in return. Thus from the very beginning the doctrine of Inspiration (*adesh*) was ingrained in my heart. What

religion shall I embrace? Prayer answered the question. Should I give up working in an office or become a preacher of religion, a missionary? Prayer dictated the answer. How shall I regulate my relations with my wife? Prayer settled the point. How far should I be involved in money matters? Prayer laid down the rules. I did not then give much thought to the doctrine of inspiration. But this much I knew that to pray was to get an answer; whosoever wanted to see and hear, heard and saw. My understanding became so illumined by praying that it seemed I had just come out from the University after a ten years' course in logic, philosophy, the sciences and other abstruse subjects. The Lord said to me,—“Thou shalt have no books, nor aught else; do thou keep praying.” After saying my prayer I would invariably wait for His inspiration (*adesh*). “Why hast Thou not told me if I should give up secular work? Why hast Thou not let me know how I am to settle this or that affair?” By and by, I joined the Brahmo Samaj, strove after spiritual life, became an ordained missionary, and

commenced preaching,—all these and more came to pass.

It is because I believe in prayer that my life is what it is, that I can make out how deplorable is the spiritual state of my friends. Self-deception in the matter of prayer should be driven out from our community. He is a deceiver who having prayed waits not for an answer. He whose inner state and outer expressions do not tally, who talks over-much, who does not keep his mind collected during prayer is a deceiver. The prayerful state of the soul is very difficult to attain. He who allows himself to drift with the flow of words is a deceiver, a hypocrite. He who in the afternoon forgets what he had said in his prayer in the morning, he who cannot recall, when questioned on Tuesday, what he had prayed for on the previous Sunday, is a deceiver. He who prays for wealth or honour or for worldly good, whose prayer is ninety-eight per cent for spiritual gain and two per cent for worldly gain, or ninety-nine parts for the former and one part for the latter, is a deceiver in the matter of prayer. I have

learnt from experience that he who in the course of his prayer, begs even for a pie for worldly ends, his whole prayer will be un-availing. Therefore, keep your prayers pure and unadulterated; and in the end you will inherit the whole earth, yea, this world as well as the world to come!

As by the simple process of adding up one, two, three and four you may arrive at the total correctly, so the laws of prayer can be proved to be as infallibly true as the rules of arithmetic. I can prove that by prayer I have got what I did not have, and that I did not occupy the place that I do now. Hence, it is that I tell my friends over and over again that the most favourable time and state for prayer is when a person is in distress on account of some illness in the family, for some calamity or some pecuniary troubles. In times of adversity prayer wells up spontaneously and unceasingly. If a man in his hour of distress can ask God with a smiling face,—“Lord, I have nothing to complain, teach me asceticism in the midst of these circumstances,” then, no sooner has he prayed

than he attains blessedness here and hereafter. The petitioner shall seek only spiritual good, but all things else shall be given to him. In times of domestic dissensions, or disputes over doctrines God's children should resort only to prayer. And as soon as they return after saying their prayers they will find peace and harmony established. Hence, I ask my friends to have recourse to prayer only. But they do it not and so they suffer.

I have now narrated to you the first lesson of my life. Knowing what a precious treasure prayer is, I offer it my loving homage. May all mankind knowing prayer to be dearer than wife and children, the repository of spiritual wisdom, and recognising it as the essential thing in life and religion, love and honour it."

That the soul may not wait on any one else but God therefore complete independence is necessary. When complete independence makes the soul dependent upon God then Prayer spontaneously makes its appearance. Out of prayer is the New Dis-

compensation incarnated in life. How it is effected is shown in the sequence or order presented in the chapters of the Jeevan Veda. Recently we have had an experience of this as revealed by God in this sequence,—

Scripture Study
Sustained Effort
Prayer
Success or Fulfilment.

By following this rule we are enjoying the wonderful fruits of the Spirit.

Prayer daily brings the practisant to wait upon God. Therefore there is no reason to wonder that it will induce sin-
awareness. What wonder is it that before the awe inspiring presence of The Incorruptible Holy God, the human soul would see its sin-soiled unclean state, It is very natural therefore for Keshub to pray for friends in the following manner:—

“O blessed God, together we have celebrated the *Utsav* (spiritual festival), gone through various spiritual exercises, participated in rejoicings and dramatic entertainments;

Why then, this aftermath of suspended animation? My friends say I am a sinner, and I also say I am a sinner. In the measure that I realise my sinfulness, to that extent may my friends realise their saintliness; so there is no love lost between preceptors and disciples, no spirit of unity between them; here there is no possibility of compliance, of mutual dependence. In my opinion our sins are on the increase. Owing to a morbid condition of the self there is no desire for the bread of life. To hug a brother's feet to one's bosom and shed tears of loving devotion, I have not seen it for many a day. If anybody else (except myself) had been the leader he would have secured the love and devotion of his disciples. It would have been as between one saint and another, and there would have been heart-union. But O Lord, he who knows himself as a great sinner, he can never have disciples. My own character I understand very well. Because I could not get people like myself to come to me I have failed for once. If a few sinners like myself had come to me I could have worked with them. And those who would like to be as my exalted superiors, they

do not wish, they do not like that I should point out their defects or hint at their faults during prayer. These who would like to remain my venerable elders I cannot work with such people.

“I know full well that I am a sinner. This avowal of mine is true, and no figment of fancy. Therefore, no one will be of one mind with me, They will not take to the chariot of self-abasement. They do not like to listen to so much harping on sin after twenty-five years. They say, in the midst of such developments of love and bhakti why this harping upon sin, sin. Our lives have now become so full of the honied sweetness of the spirit, and we are so very happy! ‘What harm does it do if we cannot love our brother just a little?’ This is what everybody says, only I do not. As for me I hold fast to the belief that if I do not love my brother I will have no God-vision and I will be denied access to heaven also. I repeat every-day,—Say brother,—“I have sinned, but nobody minds me. On the contrary they transgress all the more. O Mother, Thy child

(referring to himself) remains true to Thee. As for me, my services here have terminated. No, not till I get sinners like myself my work is suspended. Those who have no sins, no greed, those who do not think of the morrow, those who are Saints, how can they be one with him (referring to himself) who is a materialist worlding and who lives on the proceeds of his printing press. Soiled hands can never be pressed into the service of the Mother Beautiful. If I do not proclaim myself a great moralist, a great saint, I cannot be at one with them. But why grieve over the loss of my job here. In Thy world there is plenty of work, plenty of jobs. If my Brahmo brethren do not accept my services, the superiors following them will accept me,—those who are coming after fourteen thousand years. So I rest in peace happy to be in Thy world home with good living and plenty of work to do. O God bless us that united in love and deep attachment and becoming one in spirit we may form a worthy group-body and be happy.”

The first lesson of *Jeevan Veda* is

Prayer, the second Sin-awareness, that this sequence is natural, will have to be admitted by all. Hence this extract from Sin-awareness :—

The assembled devotees asked,—
 “What is the next theme?” The first was prayer; what is the second chapter of the book of life? Hear, ye devotees, the second theme also relates to a very important matter. As in the first, so in this also you will notice a vast difference between myself and others. My sin-awareness is very strong; it is not so strong in others. My sin-awareness was not derived from a critical enquiry into what sin is, and what constitutes sin. My sin-awareness arose from the sight of sin; instantly and intuitively I became aware of sin. In the state of mind I am speaking of, no second person appeared as a spiritual preceptor to make me aware of sin. I became the most uncompromising witness of my own sins. My heart constantly cried, “I am a sinner,” “I am a sinner”. If on waking up in the morning, my heart said anything, it was this one refrain,—“I am a

sinner". Morning, forenoon, afternoon, all the eight watches of day and night, as long as I remained awake, this sin-awareness never left me. In the vocabulary of the world, theft, robbery, misappropriation of others' property are called sins. In my vocabulary sin is sloth; it is weakness, it is a morbid condition, it is a disease, it is proneness to sin,—the possibility to commit sinful acts. I did not stop by calling the actual commission of an act to be a sin, but I have looked with feelings of horror upon the possibility of committing sin.

I did not search for the meaning of this word in any dictionary; I did not coin it. It was revealed to me when the divine light of conscience flashed upon my heart, and I beheld more than a hundred, nay, more than a thousand infinitesimally small things, some subtle, some gross,—sloth, weakness, wordly attachments and what not,—all present there.

All these lay hidden within the soul in such a manner that if the light of con-

science had not flashed thereon nothing would have been perceived. As the gas-light in this house of worship occasionally bursts into a blaze, so did the light of conscience flare up within me. And I saw I was full of sin, sin and nothing else. As long as there is the body, there are in it the roots of lust, anger and other sins. When I say this, I must also tell you that I do not believe in the doctrine which ascribes man's birth to sin. I do admit that man is born with the possibility of committing sin.

When bodily propensities are present the root of sin is also *there*. I may commit sin. What sins? I may tell a lie; I may steal. How may I steal? If the sight of another's wealth begets in me a desire to possess it, or if even for a minute the thought occurs,—“I wish it were mine, not his,”—that would be stealing. How may I tell a lie? If at any time my life be at stake I may, though I am not sure, tell a lie. Even if I do not tell a lie, I may say something which, while not a downright lie, may produce a false impression in the minds of those who

hear it. Am I then a liar? Yes, not in spoken words but in thought. Am I then a thief? Yes, not in deed, but at heart. Similarly, if I consider myself better than I really am, I am guilty of the sin of pride, of vanity. If it strikes me even for a moment that I am more learned than you are, I commit a sin. If at heart I love myself more and others less, if I seek my comfort more than that of others, I am guilty of the sin of selfishness. Thus I see within me so many shapes of sin, of varying sizes and proportions, that they really look as if they were so many worms of hell squirming and wriggling. I am sure that even now I commit no less than a hundred sins a day. Were I to count the number of sins I have committed in this life, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that I have committed a million sins during these forty-four years. My sin-awareness is so poignantly keen that the mind will detect immediately even the smallest of sins. And this sin-awareness brings mental torture. My sin-awareness is so unsparing as if it were an avowed enemy of my lower self, as it has been deputed to enumerate the sins of some one else than

those of its own. From morn to eve it is occupied with ticking off sins the whole time, —here selfishness, there covetousness, now wounded vanity, then the desire to tell a lie, next, greed for money, again, seeking my own happiness in preference to others; and so on. The counting continues, night follows eve but still it knows no end.

This counting is not an affair of the intellect but of emotion; it is of the heart and it smarts, it hurts. It is not merely that reason passes its judgment,—“so much pride is not right, such selfishness is wrong”. No, the arguments of the rationalists have no weight with me. The plain truth is, that sin-awareness brings instant pain and torment. Just as a spider, feeling by instinct, seizes a fly the moment it settles somewhere on its big cobweb, so can the spirit instantly feel and detect a sin the moment it impinges itself on the network of spiritual nerves, if I may so call it. If there is present anywhere in life a disturbing thought, a sin of omission or of commission, a precept of religion violated, a weakness permitted the ever-vigilant

mind instantly perceives it. And perceiving, exclaims,—“Aha! what of all these possibilities of evil within, hidden from the conscious mind, camouflaged? So thou mayest be tempted to become a *dacoit*, or fall a prey to greed at the sight of millions, or covet what belongs to others?” This enumeration of sins, how comprehensive and far reaching can I make it? Like unto the river Ganges, like unto the sea, yea like unto the vast ocean! What more shall I say? There is no sin in the catalogue of sins that I may not commit. If the very possibility of wrong doing does not cease, then sin continues to exist. Hence, I do not readily reckon any man to be holy. Hence also no one, up to this day, has succeeded in shaming me by calling me a sinner; nor is it likely any one ever will. How can you shame a man who says he has kept count of fifty thousand sins in himself, and can call each one of them by name? Is it not as unavailing as accusing a man, just returned from committing a robbery, of stealing a pie? Accuse a dacoit of of stealing a pie, and he will laugh at you saying,—“what a ridiculous charge to bring

against me!" To call him a sinner, whose sin-awareness perceives sin filling every nook and corner of his being, is surely not a severe accusation or violent abuse. So if you call me a sinner, it will not be an accusation but may serve as a corrective.

Adamantine is my conscience; terrible is its cutting power. It can probe sin to the bottom, and having perceived it in all its bearings, it sets about to excise it. Directly a sin is committed, my conscience detects it. If in performing an act of charity I exceed, even by a hair's breadth, the bounds of justice, I find no peace by day or by night. The sense of justice, fully awake, sits enthroned in my heart. If there be only a day's delay in paying the servant his wages, conscience at once exclaims,—“Sinner, thou art guilty of unjust conduct”. If I plead saying,—“I could not pay to-day, I shall pay to-morrow”, conscience upbraids me,—“How couldst thou eat to-day? A man of means, thou hast plenty to fill thyself with, but what of the poor servants whose dues thou hast not paid?” What terrible injustice! I leave Calcutta and

go to a suburban garden (at Belghoria), I quit travelling on land and try a river-trip by boat, but conscience would on no account leave persecuting me. An answer has to be given, but I can give none. The Court of Small Causes is always open within my heart. I am heavy laden because of my sins. You may ask,—“Do you commit so many sins? You who belong to the New Dispensation? You have so many sins hidden within?” Well, brethren, see such is the man you hold in reverence! And you neither see his true state nor know it!

Great, indeed, is my anguish and pain; but blessed be God, that I see very few on earth as supremely happy as I am. The worms of hell are wriggling within, so much so, that I find sin in my tongue, in my eyes, and in my ears. But what is the outcome of it all? They lead to spiritual gain, to a blessed state. Had it not been for this sin-awareness, I could not have come here (the Brahmo Samaj). I would not have continued to stay here. My living hell is the cause of my living heaven. In the unhealthy state of the body it is not easy

to locate the seat of disorder, of pain or of burning sensation, and the disease is not readily detected; but in a healthy body if any part is affected, it is immediately perceived and located. This immediate perception is, indeed, a good sign, a healthy symptom of the body as well as of the mind. From this perception of sin proceeds prayer and the desire for communion with God. If only ten sins were possible, and if the inducements to sin were only ten, I would have thought, when I had overcome them, that there was no saint on earth like me. I would have considered that as I have attained perfection nothing else remains to be achieved. But every month, every day, my conscience begets ever new awareness of sin, and points out to me new ways of improvement. My mental state is like unto to the man who smarting from a burning sensation in the body is driven from one cold pool to another to find relief. Thus day in and day out, I, too, toss and writhe restlessly in mental anguish because of sin. But added to the burden of sin was that of doubt and unbelief. Is God present here? Is Jesus living? Shall I see the

face of Sri Chaitanya? As soon as such questionings arose, some one said, "Thou unbelieving soul, it is preposterous; not see the face of Sri Chaitanya, not see the dancing figure of Gouranga (Sri Chaitanya) ? Jesus, got living?" This was enough to make my nulty soul suffer. But God would not let me off so easily. I was driven from city to city till eventually I arrived at the City of Peace (Shantipur), and there in the sanctum of peace my mind was set at rest. I cried out in relief,—“Ah, the fiery ordeal is over at last!” Can any one who has never fallen ill know the value of health? Can any one who has not suffered from poverty realise the pleasures of possessing wealth? I have experienced sorrow, I have also experienced the joy of deliverance from sorrow.

With every tick of the clock some one tells me: “Thou hast attained nothing, nothing at all.” As one whips a horse, so does this inner voice keep lashing me. The wonder of it is that I weep, and again I rejoice. I weep bitterly. I rejoice exceedingly. If by taking medicine health can be restored,

who will not take that medicine? Hence, I repeatedly tell my friends, "You are sinful; you are slothful; you are culpable." But it seems as if I have been repeating the multiplication table to them, for no one gives heed to my words. Don't you know, my friends, that you are sinners? Your idea of sin is opposed to that of mine. What I call a dreadful sin is just sin to you; what I call a sin is only a fault to you; what I call a fault, is to you only an error of judgment. From the expression of your face I can make out that you are not labouring under the torment of sin. He who is tormented cannot put on an air of light-heartedness; neither can he sit idle. You consider you were sinners at one time but now you are not, and that you have become saints. It means that you shut your eyes to the high ideal of the New Dispensation. It means that salvation is coming to mean no more than it does to the Christians, to the Buddhists or to many others besides.

As for me I find that I do not stand fully acquitted before the Lord. The

sinner who is now occupying this pulpit (referring to himself) is the greatest sinner in the Brahmo Samaj. This is not rhetoric, not poetry, but sober truth: my own self bears witness to this truth. There are few sinners like me on this earth. I am full of sins. That which counts as one sin to others is a fivefold sin to me. That which you do not recognize as a sin at all is sin to me. The standard by which others will be judged is not that by which I shall be judged for my sins. Therefore, whenever I think of God in His role as the Great Judge, my whole frame shudders. If my words lack ever so little in sweetness, the judge is heard within admonishing,—“How is it that thy words are not sweet? Why can’st thou not speak words of heavenly sweetness unto all? If I say any-thing savouring of harshness, I at once suffer torment. I would suffer day and night, I would suffer for days together at a time. I am enjoined not only to be truthful but also to be sweet in speech. If I look with disfavour on any one, it begins to prey on my mind. Is even a momentary scowl, then, an offence? Yes, to the man of

the New Dispensation it is a serious offence. Therefore, I adjure them who occupy positions of trust in the New Dispensation to get themselves purged of their faults. You say adultery is a sin. But I say how reprehensible if one evinces even a little undue attachment to woman-kind, or is inordinately fond of woman's company. You say stealing is a sin; I say, it had been held so even in Moses' time. But a new code has come to us. Are you much occupied with the thought of money? How deplorable! Are you still engrossed in wordly affairs? Do you not know that it is an abomination to be so occupied? Even during the five minutes set apart for meditation you steal a few moments to think of how you will feed your children, or whence will your money come? Are you getting over-anxious, and thinking of the morrow? All this is stealing in the new code.

May sin-awareness greatly increase in us. You know what sin is; and you know that virtue or holiness is a better thing than sin. If with sin-awareness pain,

anguish and sorrow come, let them come. Our compassionate Mother has so ordained that happiness shall come in the wake of suffering. If quinine or some other specific for fever is at hand, let fever come if it must. If awareness of sin bring on suffering that itself will lead to happiness. What can sorrow do when I have known the Lord of Yoga (mystic union), when I have experienced the joy of communion! Why shall we fear suffering even unto death when heavenly joy and happiness will surely follow? Hence is it that I no more ask, who is greater—God, the Lord of Life Eternal or *Yama*—the Lord of Death! It is true that thousands of sins beset us, but millions of remedies are at hand. Millions upon millions of Satan shall I destroy in an instant. He who has consecrated his life to the Divine Mother, how can he have any fear of sin? Satan has no power over him. Friends, if I have spoken to you of the dark side of life, of darkness, I have also spoken to you of the brighter side of life. If you have sinned, let your soul be in travail, and as you suffer its agonies, the Goddess of

Peace will come unto you and give you peace and rest!"

We have all to admit that our lives are not so spiritually alert as Keshub's. Our sin-awareness is also not so keen and sharp. In spite of our unworthiness on this point why have we reproduced above in full the chapter on "Sin-awareness", from the Jeevan Veda? Because in this chapter the means by which our insensibility may be stamped out are recorded in clear and forceful language. While reading it we are left in no doubt that our mental states are similar to those of Keshub. If our minds are similarly constituted what, then, is our instability due to? The answer is our lack of concentrated effort. What are spiritual exercises meant for? To stamp out our inattention. If heedlessness disappears and truth shines in all its glory when we turn the light of Conscience on it then why should we not do it? If we brood on our sins our minds become enfeebled. Why should we let this thought shut out truth from our lives? God Himself waits on us with the remedy of conscience bringing peace

with it, let us avail ourselves of it. For we must remember, that as sin grows from more to more within us, the preparations to stamp them out and bring peace and purity in our lives are no less in evidence. How is direct contact with God affected? By means of *Viveka* and *Vairagya*—the Inner Voice and Detachment. Here are Keshub's own words from the Chapter on "The Inner Voice" in his "Jeevan Veda".

"If there be a voice speaking within one's self men usually take it to be that of a disembodied spirit. It is generally believed that only he who is possessed of spirits hears voice within and without. From the dawn of my religious life I have many a time heard such voices and words spoken within and outside myself; but I have never taken them to be utterances of spirits, nor ever shall. This is another peculiar feature of my life. That within every individual, there lives and moves another being, that there are two tongues in what appears to be one, and that by close listening two voices, distinct and unmistakably clear, can be

ascertained,—this has been found to be true many times and no many occasions. Men discuss, reflect, and by reasoning derive their religious knowledge. But in my case it was not by the process of reasoning and deliberation that I took to the the path of religion; this I have admitted again and again. I do distinctly feel the presence in me of another person who is not myself and who addresses me as “thou,” and it is by listening to His words that I take to the practice of religion.

That there is some one who speaks within the heart,—is a well-attested truth which I have repeatedly experienced. I know there are many who do not hear this inner voice speaking. There are others who think that this voice comes from disembodied spirits and that the continued hearing to it begets superstition and causes harm. Some even go so far as to think that persons who hear such beliefs are current not only in this country but in all countries. If any man says there is in me Another One besides myself, then his fellow creatures in meeting assembled vote him mad. If this be, indeed

a case of madness, I would like to be possessed by such madness. It is verily spiritual madness, the madness of faith, and salvation is its fruit. I do not call it the voice of spirits. I call it the voice of the living God. I can not harbour the slightest unbelief towards this voice. Whenever I heard this voice, whenever the words, the clear accents of the Invisible Living Being reached my ears, I was quite sure it was not the voice of my friends, parents, wife or children, nor my own; it was not truths learnt from books not a recollection of the past re-appearing in memory, not a picture painted in bright colours on the canvass of my mind by the goddess of fancy. It is God's voice it is He Himself who is calling me to desist from some sin, to perform an act of piety, to start a new enterprise, to travel to a new place, or commanding me to root out some iniquity or take up arms against some evil custom. It never occurs to me to think that it is I myself who takes these decisive steps after much thought, or set about to carry out these tasks on my own initiative.

He who has dowered human nature

with this faculty, he who has made human nature what it is, can alone say what feelings arise in the minds of men when they hear such voices within themselves. I could not banish this voice from my heart by any ingenuity or effort of mine, nor by adopting any means whatsoever. Many are apt to think themselves to be great men, to have acquired much knowledge and possess the power of doing things; or to have by their own exertions removed many difficulties from their way, and to be destined to leave a name behind them in the world. But there are others who admit that though they have, indeed, done good many things in the light of their own knowledge and wisdom, there are certain other thoughts and deeds which they felt were assuredly not their own but as coming from Another Person speaking through them. This Person has a nature and a will of His own even as I have mine. As I have my decisions, so He has His rulings. One is the human soul, the other the supreme soul. The two are distinct, separate. The substantive is one, the attributives, are two. In the one soul-substance

inhere two attributes, human and Divine. The human speaks within the soul. One common organ of speech lends itself to being used by both each experiencing its own specific quality or flavour. For most men the realization of two persons in one and the same individual requires a good deal of practice, of culture. If we constantly reflect, that all inspired utterances come from God, all bad words, motives, counsels and all self-delusion proceed from me; that all good is from God, all evil from myself; that health and happiness are His gifts, and disease and weakness spring from me,—if we think and practise in this manner, then, by the operation of psychological laws, we shall take upon ourselves the blame for all misdeeds, and for all good deeds give glory and praise unto God. While to some, this perception of two persons is an acquired feeling and an acquired knowledge, to others it is natural and spontaneous.

Two birds (symbolical of the two souls) everlastingly dwell on the self-same tree of life; their colours are to some extent alike, and their voices greatly resemble each other.

There is similarity as well as dissimilarity. Those who are naturally led to hold this view, those in whom this consciousness is intuitive, in them the Divine Voice is heard at all times. As you now hear the thunder-clap reverberating in the heavens, exactly in the same manner reverberates the voice of God throwing the inner world in commotion. In many cases the fallible mind is apt to arrive at wrong conclusions. At one time they believe that a particular truth has come as a result of praying; and, again, they conclude it has been acquired by study and reflection. At one time they think that God has enlightened them as a reward of their supplication; at other times they think that they are in no way indebted to God for anything. It is only when, through self-discipline, a man is established in humility that he is able to perceive that the higher truths are not the acquisition of his understanding, that the sublime emotions are not the product of his imagination. Where faith burns bright, where the voices of two persons are distinctly perceived, there good results invariably follow. I know for certain that these words are His and those

other words mine. My appetites prompt, "Drink, go on enjoying the pleasures of the the flesh." Another voice commands,— "Follow thou my appointed path; thou mayest thereby have to wear rags, and even forsake all thou hast, yet I say therein lies thy good." My reason tells me that asceticism involves painful restrictions on food; the other Reason declares, "It will not do to follow thy own counsel; when I so ordain, the path of darkness is the best for thee. Thou shalt have to follow it even if a thousand demons of death confront thee."

In my humble life I have had very often to undergo such trials. Where my own understanding apprehended poverty, ill-health, reproach and humiliation, there, over against all, only One Person said within me—"Cast out all fear;" and my heart heeded no other voice. How can the human understanding penetrate into the dark future and decide that a particular course is the best? The journey has but just begun and yet I am in torments. I may have to live for another forty years. How, then, shall I, with eyes and

ears open, allow myself to be led by a phantom voice into the path of darkness"? Doubts such as these never crossed my mind. The voice of the One from within seemed so sweet and trustworthy that I followed it alone. The counsel of my own heart I considered as evil, and the counsels even of many good friends I considered as unreasonable. Trusting unreservedly in the still small voice within I said, "Whether I live or die, I take refuge at Thy feet, O Lord," For its sake alone I have had to forsake my brethren and kinsmen again and again; encounter various hardships, nay, part with many dear and near ones. The voice, one moment it would bring me into the light, the next it would bid me go into the darkness. God has warned me saying,—“If ever you mistake my voice to be that of some evil spirit, it will mean instant death to you.” Keeping this admonition in mind, I have always believed the voice to be that of the Invisible Spirit-God, and not of any evil spirit. Verily, the voice is His Who dwells commingled with the soul of man.

The more I practised communion

with God, and studied the science of the mind, the more I inwardly realised that the tenement called "man" is two-storied, man occupying the lower, God the upper. Two birds inhabit the one tree of life, one the little bird, the human soul, and the other the larger bird, the Divine Soul. And I realised that what I had believed in from my boyhood was not unreasonable, namely, that what is called the tongue of man, when dissected, is found to consist of two sections, one of which utters divine truths (*Vedas and Vedantas*), the other utters words of death. The one, the gross carnal tongue, speaks of things worthless and unprofitable; the other, the subtle (*spiritual*) tongue speaks of the glories of God. If the ear is deaf, one cannot hear God, but in its stead hears "money," "money." But if you cultivate your power of hearing, you will hear the sweet accents of the spiritual tongue. I cannot say how strong can be his faith who has not heard the voice of God; but those who are still struggling to follow the inner voice, I promise them an end of their struggles. As for me, no one dare laugh away this faith of mine. I do not believe that any

one has the power to shake a faith which has stood the test of twenty years!

The belief that there are two voices, two persons cannot be banished from the mind. Who does not wish to take precedence in his own estimation by claiming that it is he himself who acquires learning and wealth, and decides religious questions? But there is the Other One who dwells within, before whose august presence I become as a servant, a slave before his liege-Lord, a pool or a mud-hole beside the vast ocean, a tiny lamp before the colossal sun, a small hut before a palatial mansion. In the face of it all, how can I pose as the Chief, the Master? The instant I say, "Let me go and work for money," the Other peremptorily orders, "No; thou shalt not." When thousands warned me saying, "Don't do this thing, if you do even good men will desert you, and there will be no end to your humiliation;" the still small voice within, like muffled rumblings persisted in its protestations. When people spread the snare of delusion around me, hanging the millstone of evil counsel round my neck,

even the rumblings could not be stopped. The voice would be heard throughout the day; at night, too, it would keep me in a state of excitement, till my heart became heavy and my distress acute. When I asked, "Let me go to the left," the voice said, "No turn to the right." When I said, "Happiness and prosperity," the voice said, "No." When I cried, "It is light," the Voice said, "It is dark." Thus would the Divine Indweller answer me back every time. The Court of Appeal is always open, it knows no holiday. I have either to recognize that God speaks within; or I have to suffer myself to be haunted and harassed by legions of evil spirits tearing at me from all sides till all peace and happiness are at an end. Shall I, a man of much learning, submit to this One-man rule? Shall I disregard the wisdom of scripture authorities and follow the dictates of this Person? Even that profound scholar, Socrates, listened to the words of his "daemon." Wise as he was, he used to follow its counsel instead of his own.

The voice of God should never be

mistaken as the judgment of human understanding. If you do so, you will deceive yourself. My solution of this problem differs from the decision of others. If the whole universe go to rack and ruin, I shall never renounce this faith in the inner person. I did not come to it by any weighing of consequences; faith can never rest on such utilitarian basis. Because some men have gone astray by adopting this course, that is no reason why I should give it up. Because some men have committed forgery that is no reason why I should give up handling or using money; that can never be. As for those who are after money-making, they will pursue it at all costs. Because some have died, should those who are alive also die? When, therefore, I see two persons, my own self and God, and when I find in the words of one only ignorance and immorality, and in those of the other quintessence of all scriptures, how can I regard the two persons to be one and the same? Why should I appropriate to myself the glory which is due to God? Why should I foist on his shoulders my own faults

and shortcomings? You may argue that a man may take advantage of this doctrine and proclaim his own words to be those of God. You may say, "O man, when you feel the desire for appetizing food, you will give out that words to that effect have come from the mouth of God. You will make God speak words which will justify all your evil desires and misdeeds" But I cannot abandon my faith because some may turn out to be imposters. During these twenty years how many times have I not heard His voice, and how many things have I not heard, and yet never once have I been deceived? Never once during these twenty years have I had to repent on this score. Verily, I see the two souls, the human and the divine, dissolved, as it were in one receptacle. I do not hold the view that the creator dwelleth in some remote heaven, and I am left alone on this earth. No, I see His hand within my hand; His tongue within my tongue, and the Eternal's lifebreath animating my life. When I listen in faith and feel the tongue moving, I watch whether the two tongues are moving in unison.

If it is my sinful tongue alone that moves, I wish I could cut it off; and I beseech the Divine tongue to have its say.

I give no heed to the words of those who call this a figment of fancy. I have not the least doubt on this point; had I any, I would not have spoken from this pulpit. What would you say when two tongues are clearly distinguishable? Would you say that man is God, that the human soul and the divine soul are one and the same? Verily, two tribunals stand out in clear contrast, the higher tribunal always quashing the decisions and verdicts of the lower. Even while you refer to the decision of the lower Court, the higher Court has already reversed it. Therefore, I am a dualist. I see two Judges; one my own soul and the other ruling over and guiding it. As when I speak, my words are uttered in spirit, for the tongue of flesh cannot speak by itself so, too, when God speaks the words are spiritually uttered, spirit speaking to spirit. The soul's utterances are like earthly sounds; the sound of iron or brass wires, the murmur of brooks or the

warble of birds. Yet they are passing strange and exceeding sweet. That ear alone can discern the voice to which God gives the power. May I have increasing faith in the voice of God. May you also following the leading of faith, work out your salvation.

Thou Friend of the poor, the In-dwelling Spirit, I know not in what region of being art Thou hidden. Within my heart a new *Veda* is chanted, a new scripture is being recited, my ears drink in the words thereof, but I see not Him who doeth all these. There is one who as Chief Justice passeth judgments but I know not where His Court is. From within the very marrow of my bones Thou makest Thyself known only Thy voice. Secreted within the dark recesses of my soul, Thou art voicing Thyself. As noises heard in a deserted house frighten people, so I am often startled at the sound of Thy voice within the heart. In a dark corridor of my heart I hear a voice. Instantly I ask myself, who could it be? Who is it that bids me turn away from the path of pleasure? And I said to myself, "It is none

but my God. Thou, Lord, Thou revealest Thyself in the trees; in the sun and the moon, as well as in the laws of morality. I believe in that mental science which says Thou art present as a person in the economy of nature; that Thou dost preside in person in the moral laws, keeping alive the moral sense of mankind. If failing to find Thee in the world outside I ever become indifferent, the inner voice never suffers me to go to sleep. Whenever I am on the point of doing any wrong, I receive a shock. Whether I stay indoors or go into the gardens, or move out of the house, the voice divine keeps ringing in my ears; even if the ears were plucked out, the voice would still be heard. If the body were burnt to ashes, the inner fire would go on burning. Such is Thy voice that it sounds like the mingled roar of a thousand mighty streams, hurtling down on the rocks in one tumultuous mass. However much I try, I cannot turn a deaf ear to Thy voice. Thy voice and mine; I cannot regard the two as one and the same by any means whatever. So sweet are Thy words that I have never come to grief by listening to them. On no

account can I say that Thou hast ever led Thy servant into wrongdoing by evil counsel. Every word of Thine that I have been able to catch has been an infallible truth. Never has it so happened that I mistook the voice divine as mere fancy; nor have I had any cause to repent. Whenever I have caught Thy words, I have caught them correctly. Having realized Thee by believing in Thy oneness, I will hold on to this vision of Thee and laugh at imaginary fears and the opinions of the world. For twenty years has Thy servant carried on this business and never has he incurred any loss but has been a gainer every time. Verily, it was an auspicious moment when I took to believing in the voice of the Living God; for thereby I have come to such an acquisition in this space of time. O Divine Mother, may all who have sought Thy protection seek also the shelter of the Divine Word. Grant us this blessing. I have known, O God, what an abundance of peace and happiness fill the breast when forsaken by everybody, I have remained loyal to Thy words. Therefore, I beseech Thee with folded hands that turning away from my own perverse inclin-

ions and the evil counsels of other men I may pay heed only to Thy words. What Thou sayest, this alone may all of us seek to know. Let earthly pulpits be silent. Do Thou alone speak to me in gentle whisper filling the world within and without. Thy words are as sweet to me as nectar, the words of others are as poison. Speak to me over and over again. May we, through the power of Thy spoken word, kill the demon of sin and attain holiness and peace!"

Now we fully understand that there is nothing to bear comparison with the crowning glory of Conscience or the Inner Voice. Where contact with conscience is not effected we must understand that the spiritual religion which springs from direct contact with God has not come. But owing to the influence of the imaginative faculty in us we may feel pious and happy. which, however is not to be confused with the experience of spiritual religion. Because of the primacy of conscience we have reproduced it full first of all. But as conscience (*VIVEKA*) cannot come unless Detachment (*VAIRAGYA*) is

there this chapter which chronologically comes up before it is now reproduced here. These two are inestimably precious in understanding the development of Keshub's spirituality. Here is Keshub's pronouncement on Detachment taken from the chapter on "Detachment from the world and the Ego":—

The fourth chapter is sojourn in the wilderness, and asceticism, that is,—detachment towards the inner ego, and the outer world. The occasion of entering the world (the married house-holder's state) was for me like entering the cremation-ground. God had ordained that the way to the garden of happiness was death to me; and such it came to be. The highly skilled Heavenly Artist who portrayed the lineaments of my character, first painted the entire ground in deep black; and on that intensely dark background He went limning various patterns in bright glowing colours. He is still engaged in portraying me. Set off against the dark back ground, the beauty of the picture shines all the more.

Grief, affliction and asceticism,—

these became the starting point of my spiritual life. God knows how the dark cloud of asceticism hung over my life from the very beginning. The first faint quickenings of religious life made themselves felt when I was eighteen, though I had abstained from taking animal food when I was fourteen. Who advised me to be a vegetarian? Who told me that animal food was forbidden? One spiritual preceptor I knew; one master alone I obeyed; I called Him conscience—the Inner Voice. Only one word did conscience speak to the boy and he made his renunciation. Thus at the age of fourteen asceticism first quickened into being in me. Then as the religious spirit began to develop, and devotional exercises were undertaken, I found refuge at the feet of the Lord. As my spiritual fervour increased in intensity and I began praying in earnest, the cloud which was no bigger than a finger in the firmament of my young life and which was confined to and culminated in the single act of abstention from animal food, that cloud thickened and overspread my life. It became so black and dense that it saddened my heart and darkened

my face, so much so that I had no peace by day and no rest at night. All sorts of pleasures incident to youth I shunned as poison. To amusement I said,—“Thou art satan, thou art sin.” To worldly enjoyment I said, “Thou art hell, who resorts to thee falls into the jaws of death.” To my body I said,—“Thou art the way to hell, I will subjugate thee else, thou wilt lead me to death.” I knew not then what religion was, I only knew that to be a worldling was sinful, that to be luxurious was sinful. Those who had succumbed to worldliness, their fate I recalled. I knew that it is the craving for worldly enjoyment that had lured many to death. And so the voice sounded from within.—“Beware, be not worldly-minded, nor sell thyself to the world. Do not concern yourself with such weighty problems as disgrace, sin, etc. For the present, first shun all amusement, for it is by following the cue of amusements that many a man goes to hell.” Thus, there grew in me a dread of the world. Whenever the thought of the world came to my mind, I felt as if an emissary of hell had come. The visage of the world I regarded as terrifying;

and the thing called "wife" became to me an object of terror. The world seemed to me a veritable poisoned chalice; beautiful without but deadly within. I was in constant suspense and dread, I suspected that wheresoever I set my feet I would find it full of thorns, terrorised by demons, and the breeding place of malignant fevers. My smiling countenance became melancholy. My heart said,—“If you smile, you will sin; to smile is to sin.” And smiles took leave of me. Some of my friends noticed it, but they could not comprehend it. I resolved not to desire anything that might tempt me to smile; to keep away from such books and friends that were likely to induce me to smile. Gradually I became taciturn, sparing of words. I never cast a glance towards wealth and happiness.

There was no forest to retire to, neither did I betake myself to any. I had no inclination to take to the mendicant's yellow-robe, and I did not put on any. I did not adopt any unnatural means to mortify the body in any way, nor did I feel any desire

for it. The thought of any outward demonstration of asceticism never crossed my mind. I made the house I dwelt in, the room I occupied, like unto the charnel house, like unto the wilderness. I considered the hubbub made by the inmates to be verily the howlings of tigers in the jungle. Wherever I came across bad manners and bad conduct, there I fancied Death exulting in its mad capers. True, my wilderness was not an uninhabited forest, but the world around me became such a one.

Living as I did in the midst of worldly affluence, I went about wearing plain clothes. I wept not but passed my time without a smile, on my face. In this state I got up from my bed in the morning, and in this state I went to bed at night. The sun could not make me smile, neither could the moon. Do you know who was my chief companion at that time? He among the English poets who could best portray this melancholy mood. It was his (Edward Young) "Night Thoughts" that I used to read. If I felt any pleasure at all in those days it was solely from reading

that book. I would occupy myself with such things as would mortify the spirit, deepen the serious mood, and keep the mind away from evil thoughts. When did all this happen? When I was eighteen, nineteen and twenty. I was then preparing to enter the world having been just married, but I found that the spot whereon I was going to set up a house was verily a cremation ground. I had not much knowledge of the world, but I had learnt to fear it. Some one within me said,—“The wife is coming; you have to start a household of your own, Will you seek happiness in worldly enjoyment? Will you spend your time in the company of your wife, and talk about worldly affairs? Will these things make you happy?” I reflected,—“What a precious entity, a noble thing is the human soul? Shall I subject it to a wife, shall I subject it to the world?” And I resolved never to do so. For I knew of many who perished having subjected themselves to their wives, many who were struck dead by thunderbolt of worldliness. Therefore, I forbade the world to touch me. Therefore, also, in everything concerning the world I go about in fear and trembling. For I was much

afraid that I might someday be in the death-grip of worldliness, or succumb to greed of money. Just as I regarded lust and anger as deadly, so I looked upon wife, children and the world as a source of danger. Lest I loved these more than God, lest I regarded the world to be dearer,—this fear led me to regard the world as a terrible demon. Lest the lure of the full moon made me forgetful of God's love (*bhakti*), I loved the darkness of the new moon, I felt no desire to go to pleasure gardens for amusement, nor any exhilarating sense filled my heart. I used to sit still as a statue in a dark place, and only a word or two out of my heart, would I address to God. For, there was none else but He to communicate with. Thus did the tree of my life take its root in asceticism. And not the root only but the form and shape of every limb and member,—all were moulded by asceticism. So there came to pass all that should naturally develop in a life rooted in asceticism. In the fight between the powers of good (*gods*) and the powers of evil (*demons*) the good, the God-in-man won the victory. Because conscience and asceticism,—the two

brothers had together set about to rule over my sinful life, I found later that never again could the world (*worldliness*) come near to tempt me.

My religious life began with the mortification of self and the mortification of wife. In the end the very people who were the objects of my terror turned out to be my friends; the cremation ground where I had begun to set up a home for myself, has transformed itself into a garden smiling with flowers and fruits; and through the middle of it there ran the pathway of the Lord. That it was ever a cremation-ground once, can no more be made out. The beginning was in sorrow, the ending is in happiness! I cannot class myself with those who begin their spiritual life smiling and who are fortunate from the very beginning. O the number of tribulations that passed over my head! "Not till thou hast completely destroyed thyself and made a corpse of it shalt thou attain godliness"—this was the law that the Lord applied in my case. Weeping I sowed the seed smiling I am reaping the harvest.

How bitterly I had to weep, how I rejoice now hugging the feet of the Lord! This, however, cannot be the law for all. Each man must follow the law specially ordained for him. But one lesson of this life applies to all. If a new truth has to be established, a great thing has to be achieved, a mighty movement has to be called into being, this travail of an austere life has to be gone through. If you want to leave your impress on posterity, to become a missionary, or take the vow of devoting your life to the good of the world, you will have to retire for some time to the wilderness of asceticism. If you want to become a twice-born (regenerate), then carrying the mendicant's staff you will have to go, once at least, through the ordeal of the prescribed paces. We ought to profit by the course of discipline prescribed by the ancient Hindus on the occasion of the investiture of the sacred thread. If you aspire to be born again, if you would see yourself in the hands of God, you shall have to kill the beast within you, and cast out all the evil propensities. For some time tears of anguish will be wrung out of you, the framework of

your heart will snap and crack, but at length you will be transformed and put on the body incorruptible !

.If you wish to be reborn, to live the life eternal, die once, like Jesus, Buddha and Chaitanya, pass through the ordeal of sorrow and suffering and come out risen anew. But if you are content to do only the ordinary things, then, like the professing Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian, practise, in keeping with your aim, just a little asceticism for a short time. But on no account enter life without some experience of suffering, without practising asceticism. Have you already entered the world ? If you have, come out of it, take to asceticism, and then re-enter the world. If you do it not in this world, you will have to do it in the next. If you have never wept, you can never have a hearty laugh. You will never appreciate the beauty and grandeur of the full moon, if you have not experienced the dark gloom of the new moon. Blessed be the Merciful that the flowers of joy, born of *bhakti*, loving devotion, now bloom in my life's garden.

From my experience I have learnt never to lose heart on account of sorrows or sufferings. For sorrows come as the herald of the glad tidings that 'happiness is at hand'. To take to asceticism hoping that happiness would follow, is natural, but the aping of ascetic austerities for its own sake I repudiate. I am not an aspirant of that asceticism which requires strenuous efforts to attain. I did not practise it by smearing the body with ashes, I did what naturally suggested itself to me. Natural and spontaneous is the kind of asceticism I adopt, and from such asceticism I derive much good. When dark clouds form, we know there will be a shower of rain. So whenever the cloud of asceticism appears in the firmament of life, I take it as an evidence of this scientific truth—that either there will be the advent of a new dispensation, or a new truth will be revealed, or also a new order of discipline will be discovered. Whenever such things occur, the spirit of asceticism first takes possession of the heart. The coming of this ascetic spell is, at it were, the labour pain, which betokens that a child, fair and full of

promise, will surely see the light.

When there is a divine command to cook your own food, to walk bare-footed, or to go and live in a particular place for a couple of days, know that these come not for tormenting the body. For no good results from mere penance and physical suffering. What after all, is the test of the asceticism? There is no cloud of true asceticism which is not followed by a shower. Forsake that asceticism which is intended for a show. Conceal the fire of asceticism within the heart outwardly keeping up your accustomed mode of living. If enlightened moderners call such conduct hypocrisy, know that born ascetics like me do countenance it. By the command of God, for the propagation of religion, I live in genteel society as a matter of social necessity; but at heart I am as a lineal descendant of the family of ascetics. My father and grandfather belong to the same family.

The asceticism that obtains among our kind is not a thing of stress and strain, but a spontaneous development. What little

of respectability and out-ward polish you find in me is retained in deference to social convention, in obedience to divine injunction. By the command of the New Dispensation my spirit has clothed itself in the ascetic's tiger-skin, so there has been no need to use it outwardly; and it is better not to do so. My brothers, see that asceticism abides in your hearts. Love it dearly as an indispensable constituent of religion. Many in the Brahmo Samaj have been benefited by it; as for the New Dispensation many practices of asceticism have been revealed in it, and adopted by it. Through asceticism the soul puts on the beauty of the regenerate life. If in your experience suffering has come first of all then the happiness that will follow will endure for ever. For all the weeping today, there will be a greater measure of rejoicing, on the morrow. If you look downcast in the beginning the smile of gladness shall surely light it up afterwards, vindicating and glorifying asceticism.

Thou Friend of the poor, Refuge of the needy, every one must hold fast to that

rule of life which Thou dost lay down for him. When on the eve of entering the householder's life I was initiated into the cult of asceticism, I knew that my life was not for merry-making, but that tribulations would, now and then, come upon it. But Thou, O God, didst not chastise me. Thou didst not break the bruised reed for purposes of correction, nor didst Thou crush the afflicted body and mind. Bitter drugs Thou dost make us take but only to save our life. Clouds overcast the sky, but not to keep it shrouded in perpetual darkness. Chasing away the clouds of asceticism comes the thrill of joy making the heavens and the world around dance in joy. The earth, too, filled with its crops, flowers and fruits, joins in the dance. I have found in my life, that every time the heart is heavy-laden, it brings forth good fruits. The darkness of night comes as the harbinger of the morning light. God of the poor, whatever Thou art pleased to ordain, is for our good. What a plethora of sorrows and sufferings I had, yet none of them has lasted. All the gloom and the sadness is gone, and day after day I have

been tasting the joys of health, holiness and spirituality. I have also experienced the joys of God-vision. Grant, O Lord, that I may never shrink from shouldering the cross of asceticism. For by it the heart is purified, the senses controlled, the spirit vow-abiding, and the whole life exalted.

Come unto me, Thou Helper of the helpless, the Ascetic of ascetics, Thou that hast forsaken Thy all,—I will follow Thee wheresoever Thou goest. Becoming an ascetic at heart I will walk with Him the chief among ascetics. After all this, how can I say that asceticism is a source of sorrow and suffering? As much of asceticism as Thou didst prescribe for me before, so much of dancing in joy is my lot today. As much tears as I shed before, so much do I now smile, and rejoice in the close embrace of my friends, wife and children who were a terror to me at one time, but now I sit surrounded by them, rejoicing in the joy that comes from Thee. I feel that I verily behold heaven on earth, that this world is no more the terrible thing it was imagined to be, and that having

been lifted above it, I have not had to enter it at all. As formerly I used to sit forlorn, in melancholy mood, so now I find this temple of God full of friends. What a goodly number of friends devoted to Thee hast Thou given me. If dancing starts now, how enthusiastically would they dance with uplifted arms! My own joys I share with them, and the happiness of others I make mine own. That my wife and children, kinsmen and friends would all befriend me, I did not even dream of. How could I anticipate that the house I had set up on the cremation-ground would be for me the place of union with the saints and prophets of heaven? How much happiness has already been mine, and how much more is yet in store for me? Hail asceticism, hail Thou Inaugurator of the spiritual path of asceticism; before Thee I prostrate myself. My prayer is—Lead us Thou along the path of true asceticism and so make us happy and blessed!

CONSCIENCE CORPORATE.

Not till conscience manifests itself as corporate or community centered does the New Dispensation become an embodied reality. A community is not formed by a single individual. Who is there among us so vain glorious as to see the ideal of perfection embodied in his solitary life ?

The following prayer shows the futility of such pretensions. It is called "Hearing the Voice of God through the instrumentality of the group."

"Thou Lord, who art man's special Providence it is Thy wonder-working word, issuing out of Thy mouth that takes on the form of the Son, the believer, and the devout saint. He only can discern the man of faith who recognises him as Thy uttered word. Father, who dare proclaim the message of the New Dispensation? It is he who has become Thy way of life embodied. Thy way of life, means dispensation, dispensation means word, word means all Thy sons, saints and devotees. Thy word assuming the shape

of humans came forth into the world Thy solemn word coming out of the awe-inspiring heavens spreads itself over the whole universe but coming to the earth means being made flesh in the form of man of the dispensation of the laws of life. I believe that the word has come into the world, has set up a stupendous commotion and has entered as a creative personality in the heart of a group. Deplorable is their spiritual state who would not listen to this word. His way of life, O God, it would not do any more to muddle through life by following our own judgement trying to work out our salvation partly by our selves, and partly by Thy help, for the uttered word means the advent of a dispensation means faith, means bhakti. This word has verily come, otherwise how could the name Navavidhan have been coined? What does this word mean? It means—follow this way of life, it says—pour all your desires and resolves in to this new way of life? This word is reverberating all over the firmament, it is gyrating producing a whirlwind. Lord it is binding on us to bear witness to the presence and operation of the word with

hundred per cent faithfulness, otherwise there is no salvation for us.

Navavidhan cannot realise itself except through this community, this community-body is the channel for the Navavidhan to manifest itself. So this house of worship is greater than Kasi, Brindaban and Jerusalem. This sanctuary bears the name—'The nineteenth century's ascension to heaven.' Within the walls of this room is heard the voice of Heaven. This place now ranks highest among the shrines of the world. From the terrace of this house, as through a telescope is seen what is going on in heaven. What Jesus, Moses, Gouranga, the Yogis and Rishis are doing. Exceeding wonderful is this watch tower of worship. This group these handful worshippers constitute the telescope. This group is an undivided body, it is a receiver, an instrument for listening in to the voice of God; It is a telescope, and these few persons merge into one another to form a single personality. This survey station is the principal seat of all Pilgrim centres in this nineteenth century.

Let us gather together in this house; the men of perfect faith sitting here catch all the words of inspiration as they come one at a time. The nectar-sweet words, the immortal commandments, the honied accents of inspiration all, all are to be had here. I have come rushing to this place from the busy haunts of the world to listen to the voice of God. Lord, attune my spirit to Thine so that I may drink deep of Thy words. We have to wait long to hear words as yet unuttered for our faith has not reached perfection. Henceforth all our activities will be word inspired, everything, from our religious pursuits to our Secular occupations will be carried on in this new way in which conscience is integrated with the community. This house will be the hallowed centre of receiving God's words and His ordinances (mantras) Bless us that we may be purified by listening into Thy voice and regulating our lives accordingly.

O believer in the New Dispensation out of sheer self-conceit you may consider yourself as the greatest of all men, but be

sure such a boast makes you a renegade of the New Dispensation '*There is no Salvation if you take to the path of life all alone,—* This saying is no mere empty talk. So lead the life of a true New Dispensationist while disowning a single individual, is for all time, impossible of attainment, when it has been made known to all of us that those whom God hath joined together if even the least of them be disowned, then we stand convicted and turned out of the fold of the Dispensation. *Alone by oneself no one counts for anything,* the union of all is the life—blood of the New Dispensation, where did you get the mistaken notion that by arrogantly disowning one of your brethren you will still remain a loyal adherent of the New Dispensation? It is mere lip service that makes you say—'to disown any one is to disown God Himself' The preeminent mark of the true New Dispensationist is that he should shed his delusion solitary grandeur, and by true self introspection see his own place at the feet of his brethren. Otherwise he relegates himself to the dispensation of the old order.

It is futile to look for the New Dispensation there where the sovereignty of the community centred or corporate conscience is not acknowledged.

May we recognise this new characteristic of the New Dispensation of conscience functioning as the group organ and he inspired to hold in loving regard the least of our fellow – believers.

What is the crowning glory of our community, and who is its sovereign ruler is brought out in the two following; prayers of Keshub:—

“Thou saviour of the fallen, do Thou point out to us how this house of worship with its spiritual revelations presides over the affairs of the world. This is the house of the apostolic assembly (*darbar*),— The mystic mansion where the light of heaven first makes its appearance, where we hold converse with Thee, and the first post office where letters from heaven are cleared. This is the place where the princes royal of heaven visit first. The rendezvous of the gods this is the heaven of the chosen apostles as well

as their living quarters. Here is the meeting place of heaven and earth. Father, may we see with the eye of faith that this place is verily thine. May all the guidance and authority for the good of the world issue from it. The glory of this place lies in the fact that the Navavidhan is being revealed here and that from this holy spot Thou art dispensing laws, ordinances and injunctions. The Assembly (*darbar*) that meets here, the rules that guide its deliberations are destined one day to govern the world. Thy tribunal is here Thou holdest Thy court here and the goods are intent on inscribing Thy decrees, while the saints and devotees are gather together round Thee. For there are no other places on earth where they may be seen all together.

If I go to a Christian Church I do not find Gouranga there, and Jesus cannot enter the Mandir of Sri Gouranga. The men of this sect are at logger-heads with those of the other, and come to blows when they meet. Therefore the saints are very fond of this new place of ours. For it is verily the

common wealth of reconciliation. Precious beyond compare is this place, it is priceless. A grand convention of the apostoli assembly is holding its session here. All things and happenings have their origin inside these walls. Only those do not hear and see, who are deaf and blind. Here meet the scriptures of the world, here diverse opinions and beliefs find harmonious accord. Here a host of craftsmen are busy welding various metals into an amalgam. And, O God. Thy chamber, Thy Court is here Lord. We hear with our own ears the laws promulgated by Thee. Buddhists, Christians, Moslems, Vaishnavas all are here in this hall some sitting some strolling about. At the present time this hall is Thy most glorious memorial. Blessed is he who extolling the greatness of this institution glorify it. Bless us that seeing with the eye of bhakti the wonder working power of this institution we may be fulfilled.

“Thou Saviour, there is no salvation in that realm where there is no institution

* From the Bengali prayer “*Darbarer gourab*”
September, 22, 1882.

for dispensing justice. Not a single sin will get exempted or remitted. The God who does not judge cannot save, look at this group of ours as it is, it is of a very low order. It is a group full of unlove; it cannot forgive, it cannot trust. It is a graceless, unhappy group left to themselves they behave well, thrown together in a group they become censorious, unloving. This group is very keen on sitting in judgement on one another. There no body can get off with a single wrong committed. The guilty one feels that the halter of condemnation hangs round his neck all the time. Here the least dereliction will inevitably bring on hair-splitting criticism and denunciation. This is why I say that one part of this group is iron and the other gold. True, the judgement of Heaven by comparison will be more enacting. But the brethren here, whether they themselves are in default or not they are very lenient to words themselves while as regards others they cannot tolerate even a hair-breadth of transgression O lord, let their judgement be more exacting. But why this anomaly - This differential treatment? Why should they be

so lenient towards themselves; while they are so severe upon others? O Mother, those who judge others so severely, may they learn to be equally inenorable in their judgement of themselves. Let their standard of judgement be more exacting still, so that even a single falsehood, the least lapse into attention during devotions on anybody's part will meet with the joint condemnation of the whole group. O Mother, do Thou thyself residing within them dispense justice, otherwise those who cannot sit in judgement on themselves what right have they to judge others? One only can rule, can chastise He who is the King of Kings, The Sovereign Ruler. This is why Thou hast so contrived that in this group there will always be one or two who will indulge in vilification any way. Glory, glory unto Thee that Thou hast placed us in a group where nobody can get a testimonial of saint hood. I am saved from the clutches of a sycophantic group. To be in Calcutta in this group is like being in the midst of an ordeal of fire. I declare with all the emphasis in my power that whoever is reckoned a saint here the same will be proclaimed as a

saint by Christ and Moses in heaven, Twenty-five years we have been together and yet none of us has won high esteem here. Here no one is wholly selfless, wholly desireless, nor an adept in Meditation (dhyan) all this portends well. Therefore I bow down to my friends a million times for it is God who judges through them, rules through them. May the fear of this divine-human tribunal constrain us to become a chastened and purified. O, apostle assembly (Durbar), you are the diety, you are God! You judge yourself as humans, but you judge others as God judges man. The God speaks within you. O, God of compassion bless us that, living under the daily surveillance and governance of the apostolic assembly we may become holy and happy, and win our salvation from Thee.

GOD THE SUPREME ARTIST.

God Himself perpetually unfolds the wonderful—mysterious beauty of His creation. We call these ideals or pictures, and therefore they are prized so high. We cannot help holding in high regard the picture He is portraying in whatever hearts He pleases. Acharya Keshub Chander was a whole-hearted admirer of such ideals and pictures. The more men and women are attracted to these ideals, the more will they be inspired to mould their lives accordingly revealing the beauty that is in them. Therefore we prize them. If a friend reveals to us the hidden ideals of his life we cannot but show our reverence to him. Why do we do so is brought out in the following prayer of Keshub:—

“O Lord of love and Compassion
Thy hands are exceedingly beautiful and exquisitely skilful. Many people have painted pictures and many painters will arise in the future but amongst them all I count Thee as the greatest of all. The plain truth is Thou art a picture producer, Thou hast

painted many pictures and so many more
 are still to come—the beauty of these enrap-
 tures the hearts and minds of Thy devotees.
 Furthermore, He who paints them is the
 embodiment of concentrated beauty. No one
 can paint with a brush if he is not inspired
 from within. The fountain head of all ins-
 piration, whenever Thou dost take up Thy
 brush surges of inspiration well up spontan-
 eously. How much beauty and charm hast
 Thou splashed over a solitary satellite—the
 moon, how much loveliness in every single
 flower, what splendour exhibited by the
 reflection of sun on the waters of the ocean,
 what stateliness of the tall trees on the
 mountain tops, what a glow irradiated
 from the myriads of scintillating stars on the
 skies, and what a combination of variegated
 colours on the body of birds,—if Thou hadst
 not done all this no one would have paid
 homage to Thee or have loved Thee as a
 master-painter. Lord, Thou art the creative
 spirit, and Thy creativity flows out of the
 delicate touches of Thy brush. Everything
 springs from the play of inspiration in Thee,
 all are pictures painted by Thee. The skies,

the creatures, the animals, the trees,—all, all are pictures, the work of Thy hand. But O loving God when passing by these pictures, we come to look at man, we are enraptured, bewildered. As the looks so matching it is the beauty of the inner spirit. How scene is the picture of the yogi, how full of fire of the man of wisdom and the man of action, and how different the picture of the love lorn devotee! And when we pass by these to the pictures that embellish the gallery of heaven, what display of sweetness, holiness and bliss is brought out in these. How beautiful is each soul! He who has seen these pictures can never express its effect in words. O God, Thy own likeness, Thy own beauty Thou hast poured into these pictures. Who knows how wonderfully beautiful is He Who has painted these pictures in the material, the animal, the human and the godly.

“O Thou Supreme Artist, Thou creative spirit,—the God of gods, why do we not meditate on Thee and Thy works? Why dost Thou beautify my spirit, my brother's spirit and the spirits of the great ones

of the earth? With Thy beautifying hands Thou art pictorializing all the time, and not a single one has turned out to be faulty. Occasionally Art Exhibitions are held here and prizes are awarded to those whose pictures are brilliant, but, O Lord, no one awards prizes to Thee. Who can interpret Thy pictures aright, who can magnify Thy glory? Who can pay the prize for an iota of Jesus? forgiveness? People say great men take their birth on this earth, but it is not so. Thy spirit brooding in solitary grandeur painted a picture and flung it on the earth, and lo, Jesus is born! Painting a picture of Sri Chaitanya Thou didst let it be wafted to the earth, and it settled on Nuddea and people say a great soul is born. What heavenly beauty in the faces of Jesus, Moses, Sri Chaitanya, Socrates and Gautama!

“O Master painter, wilt Thou listen to a prayer of mine,—paint me and my friends anew,—bright with the colours of yoga, bhakti and holiness, so that all may say that in the present century also Thou art producing beautiful pictures. Bless us all!

FAITH OF NAVAVIDHAN

God—We believe that God is one, that He is infinite and perfect, almighty, all-wise all-merciful, all-holy, all-blissful, eternal and omnipresent, our Creator, Father, Guide, Judge and Saviour.

Soul—We believe that the soul is immortal and eternally progressive.

Moral Law—We believe in God's moral law as revealed through the commandments of conscience, enjoining perfect righteousness in all things. We believe that we are accountable to God for the faithful discharge of our manifold duties, and that we shall be judged and rewarded and punished for our virtues and vices here and hereafter.

Religion of Harmony—We believe in the Church Universal, which is the repository of all ancient wisdom and the receptacle of all modern science, which recognises in all prophets and saints a harmony, in all scriptures a unity and through all dispensations a continuity, which abjures all that separates and

divides, and always magnifies unity and peace, which harmonizes reason and faith, *yoga* and *bhakti*, asceticism and social duty in their highest forms, and which shall make of all nations and sects one kingdom and one family in the fulness of time.

Inspiration—We believe in natural inspiration general and special, and in providence general and special.

Scriptures—We accept and revere the scriptures, so far as they are records of the wisdom and devotion and piety of inspired geniuses and of the dealings of God's special providence in the salvation of nations, of which records only the spirit is God's, but the letter man's.

Prophets—We accept and revere the world's prophets and saints, so far as they embody and reflect the different elements of Divine character, and set forth the higher ideals of life for the instruction and sanctification of the world. We revere and love and follow all that is divine in them and

to assimilate it to our soul, making what is theirs and God's ours.

Synopsis—Our creed is the science of God, which enlighteneth all ; our gospel, the love of God which saveth all ; our heaven life in God, which is accessible to all ; our Church, the invisible kingdom of God, in which is all truth, all love, at holiness.

Nava Samhita

Keshub Chander Sen

THE NEW BEATITUDES

(1) Blessed are they, who honour and love the seers and prophets of ancient times.

(2) Blessed are they, who believe that though prophets have departed and are now in heaven, true believers in the world may commune with them in spirit.

(3) Blessed are they, who do not ascribe omnipresence or omniscience to these prophets, yet can cultivate their fellowship in their own hearts.

(4) Blessed are they, who love to associate with the prophets of all religions, and seek together at the feet of each the peculiar ideas he has to teach.

(5) Blessed are they, who do not deify the prophets, but treat them as their elders in heaven.

(6) Blessed are they, who do not care to see the prophets, clothed in flesh in dreams and visions, or with the eye of imagination, but realise them as disembodied spirits in their own souls.

IV

(7) Blessed are they, who instead of seeing God through the prophets, behold the prophets and saints through the Lord as their Mediator.

(8) Blessed are they, who realise the nearness of heaven's saints, not in space, but in spiritual kinship and affinity of faith and character.

KESHUB CHANDER SEN

Sadhusamagama,

“Pilgrimage to the Prophets”

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